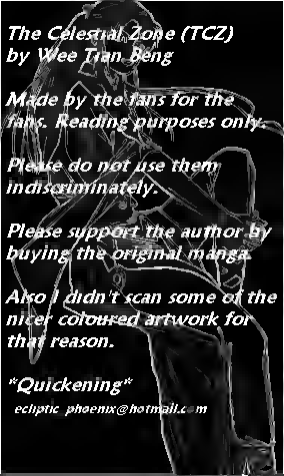
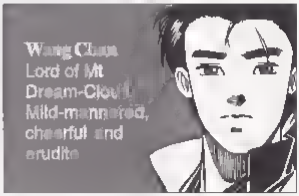
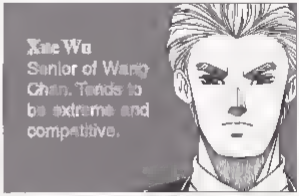
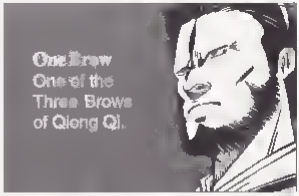
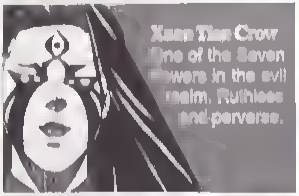

The Celestial Zone (TCZ)
by Wee Tian Beng
Made by the fans for the fans. Reading purposes only.
Please do not use them indiscriminately.
Please support the author by buying the original manga.
Also I didn't scan some of the nicer coloured artwork for that reason.
"Quickening"
ecliptic_phoenix@hotmail.com

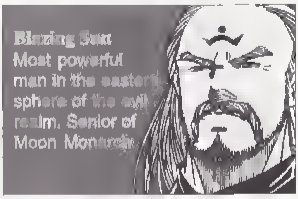
Characters in this Volume:

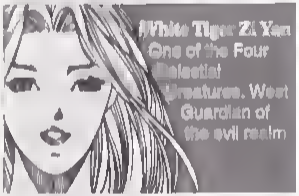


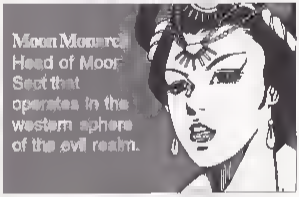


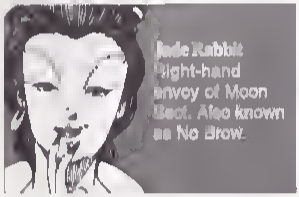


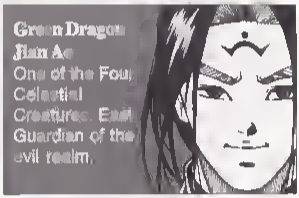

Xuan Tian Crow
One of the Seven Powers in the evil realm. Ruthless and perverse.


Blazing Sun
Most powerful man in the eastern sphere of the evil realm. Senior of Moon Monarch.


White Tiger Zi Yan
One of the Four Celestial Creatures. West Guardian of the evil realm

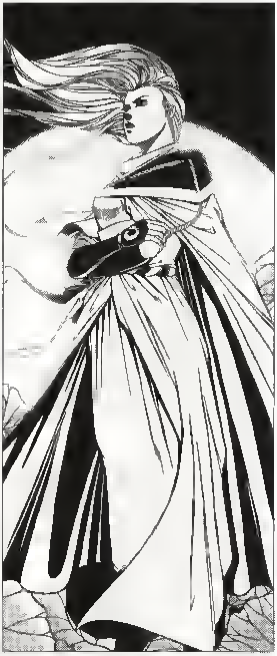

Moon Monarch
Head of Moon Sect that operates in the western sphere of the evil realm.


Jade Rabbit
Right-hand envoy of Moon Sect. Also known as No Brow.


Green Dragon
Jian Ao
One of the Four Celestial Creatures. East Guardian of the evil realm.

Prince of Wei
Self-serving and overbearing. Could not care less about his people.

Chapter Forty-One
Aha, It's You! *3*



Chapter Forty-Two
Blazing Sun *35*

Chapter Forty-Three
Moon Shadow Peak *71*

Chapter Forty-Four
One and the Same Kind *103*

Recapturing...

Chi Xue went in search of her loyal companion Xiaohai. However, he had vanished without a trace. She got acquainted with a group of boys instead — the Five-Element Prodigies. With some help from their special pet, she found out that her companion had fallen into a marsh that led to a river...

Xing Ling and Danian Chuyi fell into the trap of Xuan Tian Crow. Though Xing Ling tried to use her spirit sword, she was unable to control it and was taken hostage by the crazed woman. Chi Xue came to her rescue and the ultimate showdown began...

Panda Sage declined to help White Tiger win Wang Chan's heart, prompting her to attack people on sight..

Quickening

Thanks for reading TCZ!
Please buy the original manga!

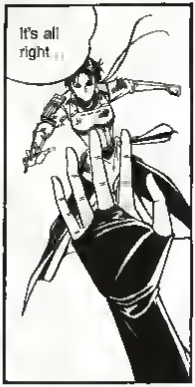
Legend has it that there is only
one route leading to the Moon Palace
perched atop Moon Shadow Peak and this route
appears only when the moon rises .
Nobody who trod this path has ever returned
Hence, for trespassers, it is better
known as the "route of no return"
This route is named the
Moonlit Lotus Gateway .

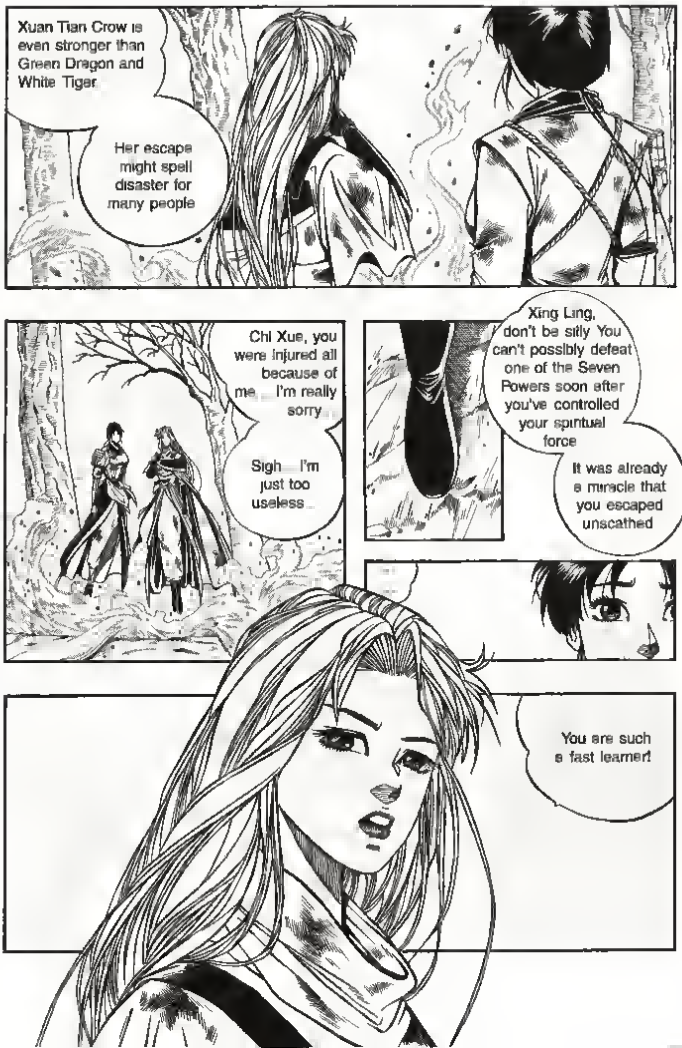
AHA, IT'S YOU!

She got away!

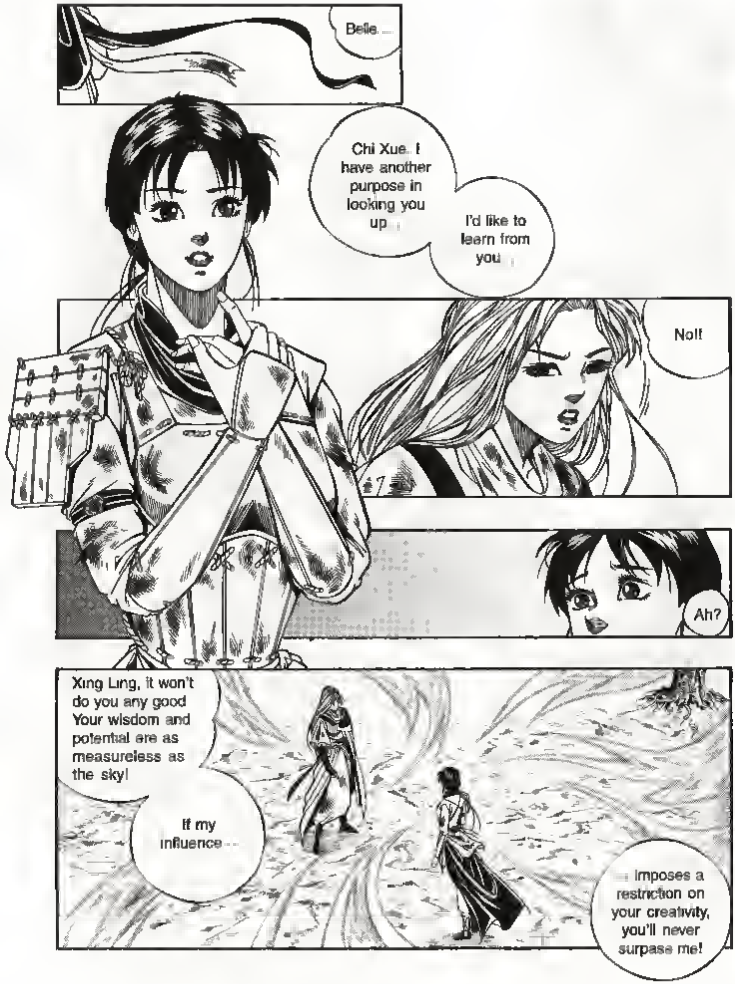
Argh
!

Chi Xue!


It's all
right


Xuan Tian Crow is even stronger than Green Dragon and White Tiger
Her escape might spell disaster for many people
Chi Xue, you were injured all because of me... I'm really sorry...
Sigh... I'm just too useless...
Xing Ling, don't be silly You can't possibly defeat one of the Seven Powers soon after you've controlled your spiritual force
It was already a miracle that you escaped unscathed
You are such a fast learner!

Manipulating the glow of the sword
...was pure luck!
Chuyi said you were looking for me
But she was so nervous that she didn't make it clear enough
Belle made two suits for us and I wanted to bring yours to you.
But that mad woman has torn it into shreds!


Belle...
Chi Xue. I have another purpose in looking you up...
I'd like to learn from you...
No!!
Ah?
Xing Ling, it won't do you any good Your wisdom and potential are as measureless as the sky!
If my influence...
...imposes a restriction on your creativity, you'll never surpass me!

Surpass you?
I can foresee that soon, you'll be my greatest opponent Good thing we're not enemies
He... Not again! I'm so stressed!
Xing Ling, you should now go into retreat on Mt Dream-Cloud
Do your best to upgrade your strength. We need your aid to counteract the evil forces!
On Mt Dream-Cloud, Weng Chen and the others will help you
All right
Pant... pant... Great to know you're safe!

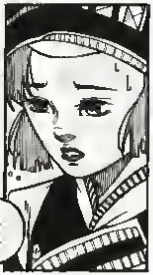
Chuyi! Number Three! Number Six!
Pant... Xing Ling... where's that woman?

I made her turn tail, of course!

Her injuries...

She's still alive and kicking!

Hey! Chuyi, why do you want to save that murderous monster?
What's wrong with you?

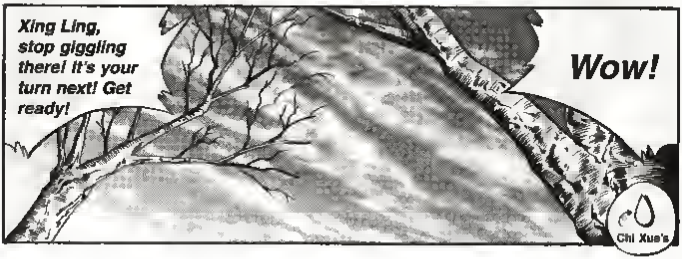


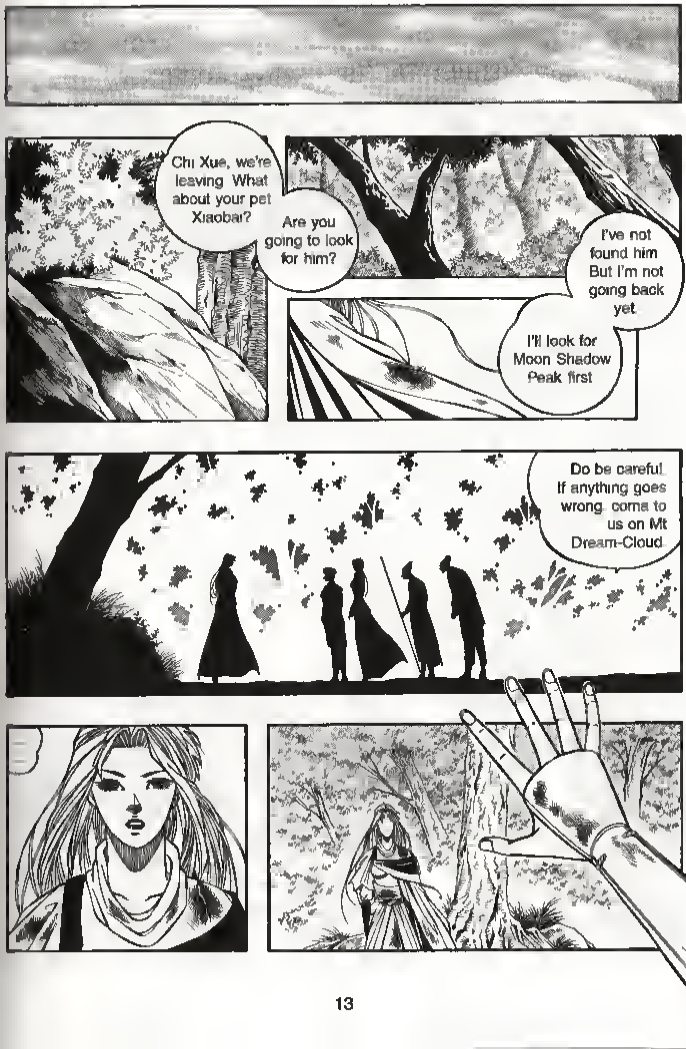
When can we stop using violence to solve problems?
Oops! Let me check your injuries!
I'm all right Go check on Chi Xue

I'm fine. Please leave me alone

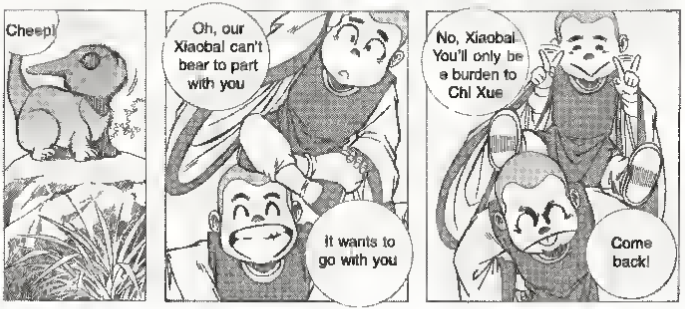
No!

You're not all right! You're covered in blood! Sit tight!
Gosh! Chuyi is using violence too!
Hee! Chi Xue has met the bane of her life at last!

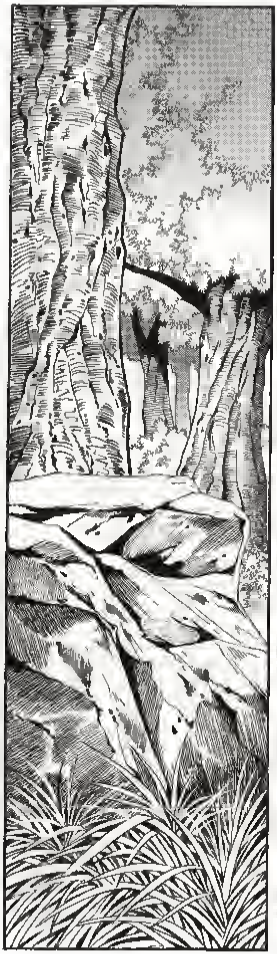

Xing Ling, stop giggling there! It's your turn next! Get ready!
Wow!
٥
Chi Xue's

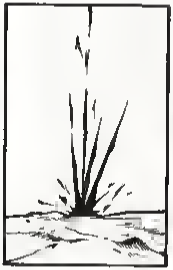

Chi Xue, we're leaving. What about your pet Xiaobai?
Are you going to look for him?
I've not found him. But I'm not going back yet.
I'll look for Moon Shadow Peak first.
Do be careful. If anything goes wrong, come to us on Mt Dream-Cloud.

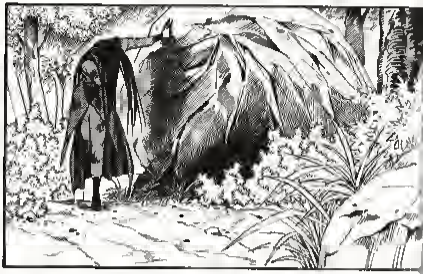
Chi Xue go without a worry
We'll look for Xiaobai for you
We're familiar with the area. Though it's a big place, we will find him!
We'll inform you right away!


Cheep!
Oh, our Xiaobai can't bear to part with you
It wants to go with you
No, Xiaobai. You'll only be a burden to Chi Xue
Come back!

I'll leave Xiaobai to you



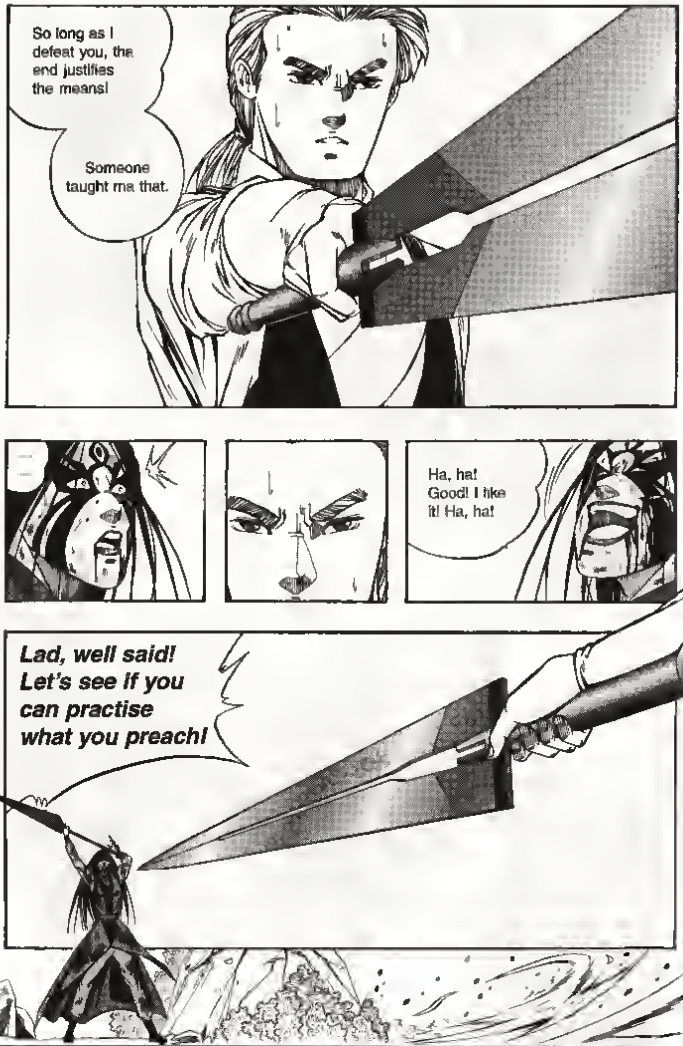


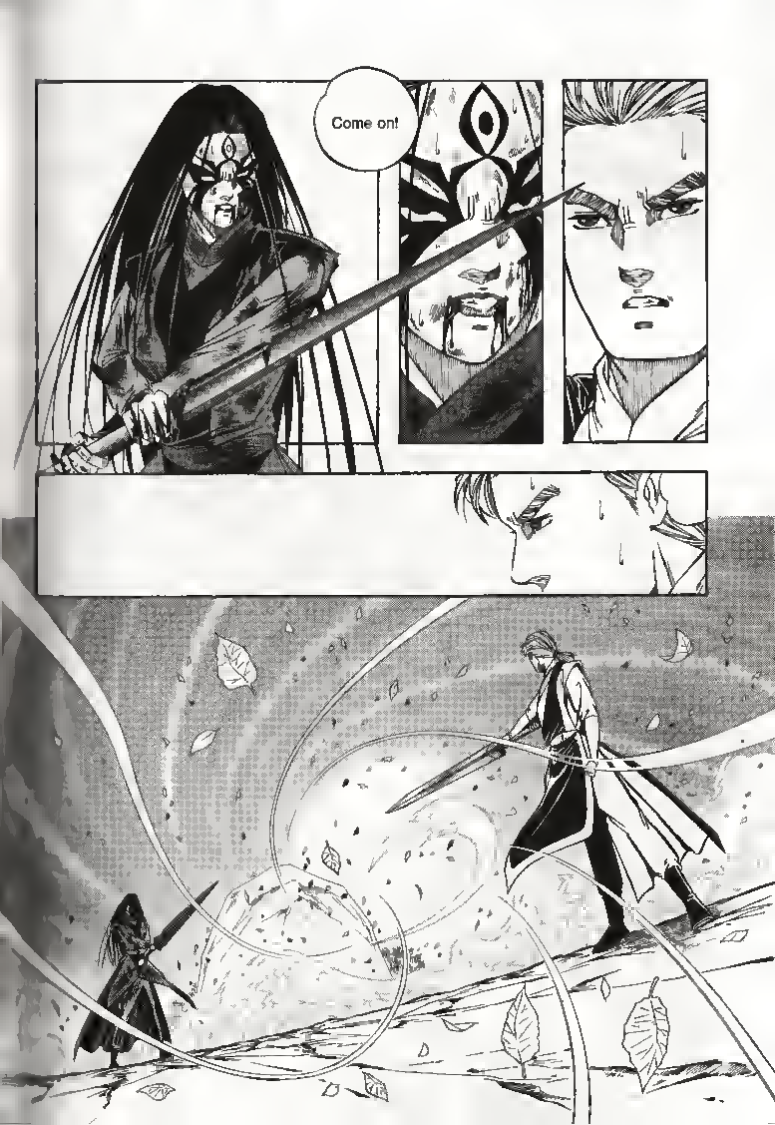


Ha, ha...!

Ha, ha!

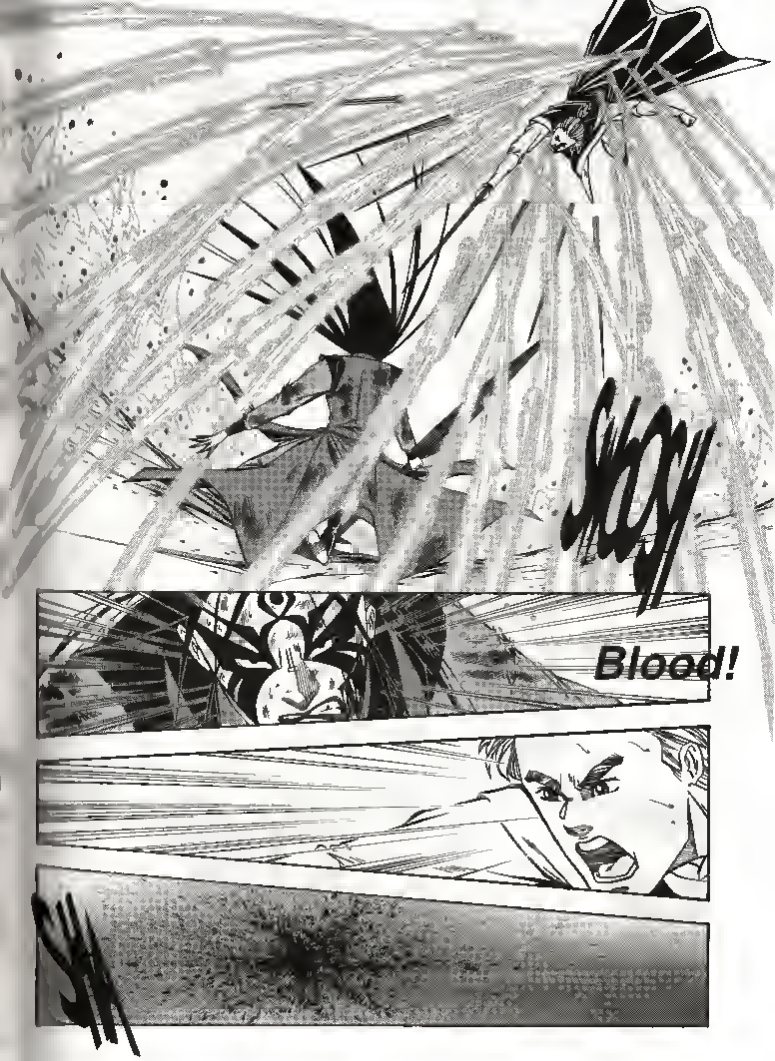
He, ha, it's you!
Well? Hoping to take revenge?
So what if you defeat me now?
Won't you be ashamed of taking advantage of my plight?

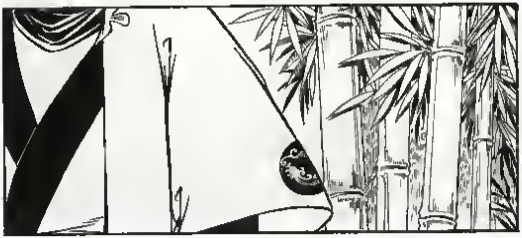

So long as I defeat you, the end justifies the means!
Someone taught me that.
Ha, ha! Good! I like it! Ha, ha!
Lad, well said! Let's see if you can practise what you preach!

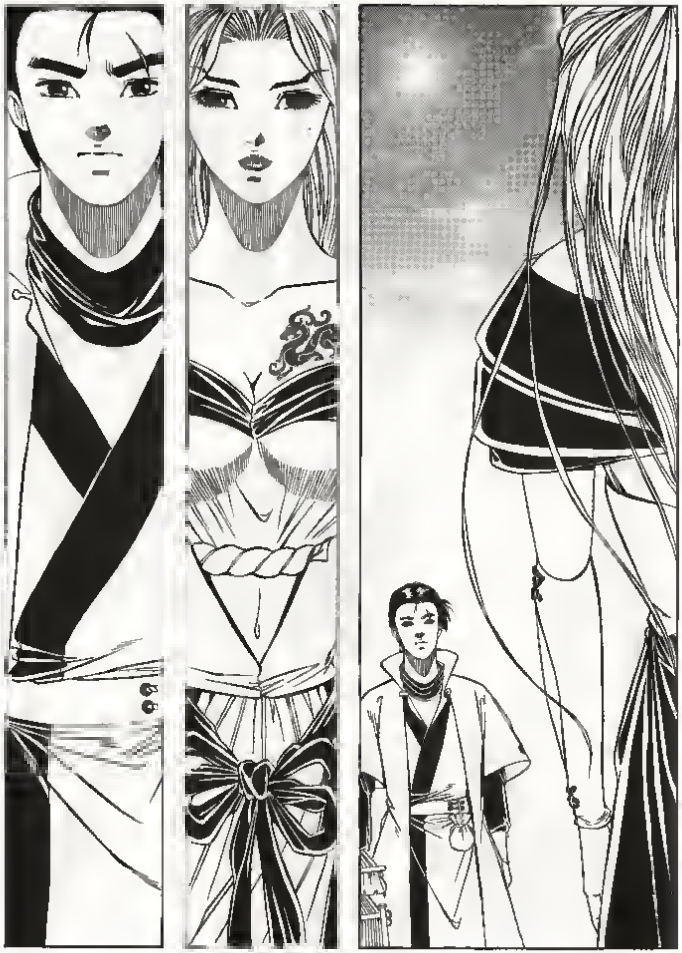

Come on!

Well? Can't do it, lad? Ho, ho!
Since you've got no guts, let me teach you another lesson!

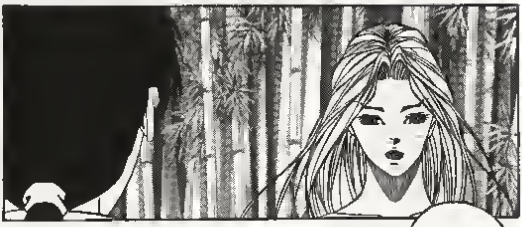
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK
Ha, ha, ha!
ARGH


Sssss
Blood!





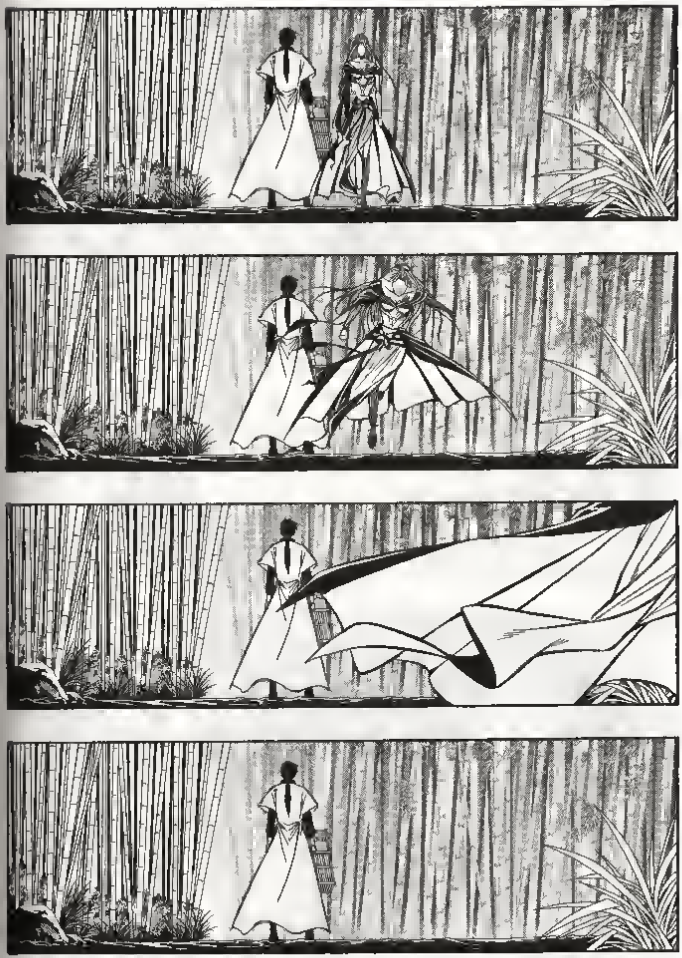
We'd better stop meeting each other.



You know something?

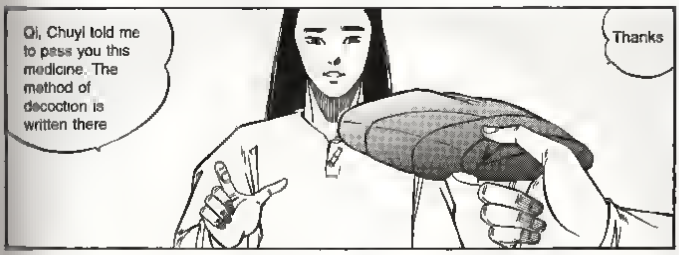
I fell in love with you

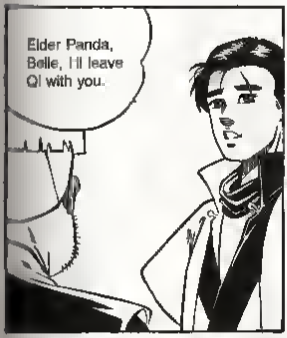
... at first sight.



Qi!
Don't worry
It's just some
internal injuries
You'll recover
after some
rest

Elder Panda, Belle, Qi, I'm sorry...
Don't be silly.
It's not your fault...
Oh? Chan, how come you're back?
Oh!


Qi, Chuyi told me to pass you this medicine. The method of decoction is written there
Thanks

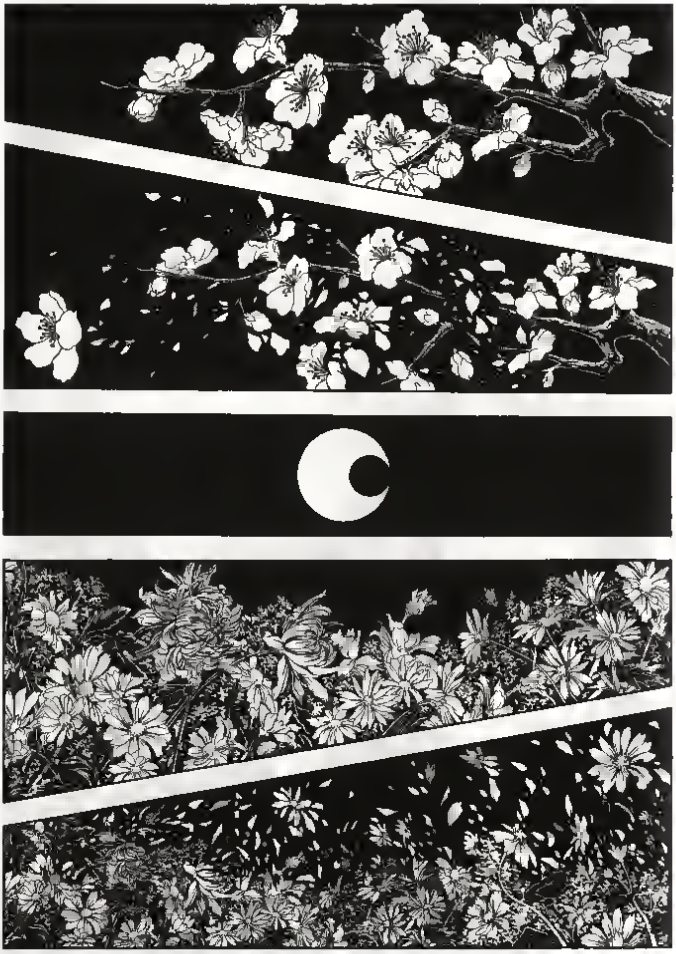

Elder Panda, Belle, I'll leave Qi with you.

Don't worry Sigh Got to change the bamboo formation

Chen, we'll look you up on Mt Dream-Cloud after summer!
Hmm

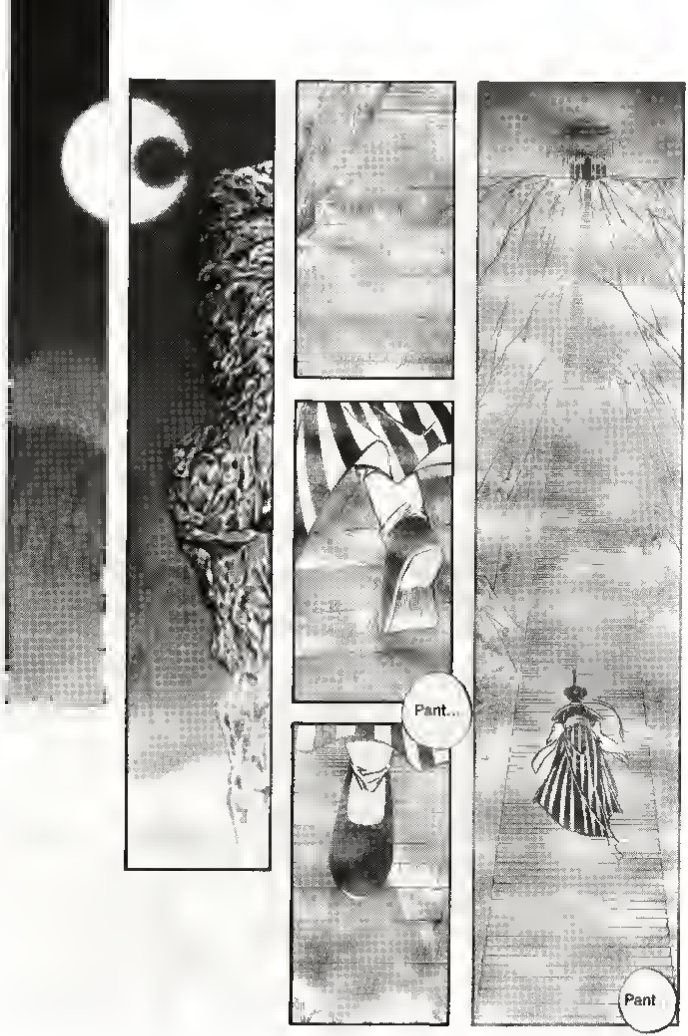
Quickening

BLAZING
SUN

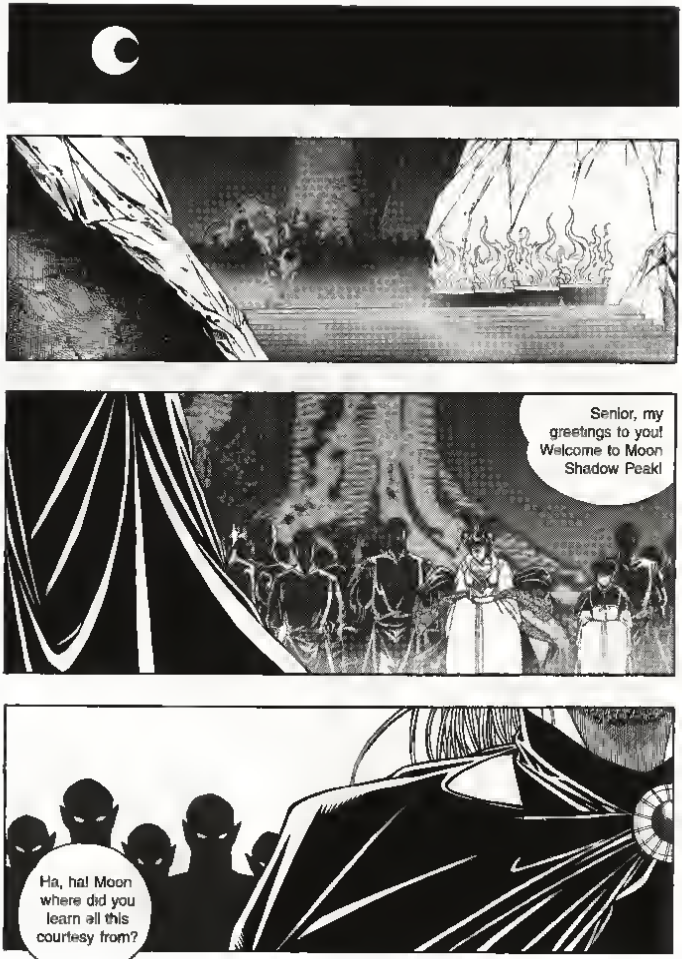


ARGH

Pant...
Pant...
Moon Shadow Peak in the west...
I will find you!


Pant...
Pant

白寒宮
Hmm, that's a good report...
What a meticulous investigation...
Well done, Jade Rabbit.
My respects to you, Chief!
Blazing Sun is here!
Oh! Excellent! I'll receive him personally!

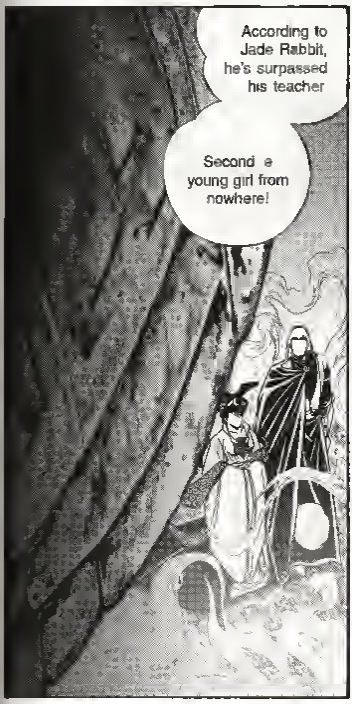

Senior, my greetings to you! Welcome to Moon Shadow Peak!
Ha, ha! Moon where did you learn all this courtesy from?

Well, I missed you, Senior! This wey, please

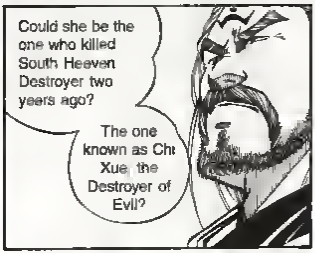
Ha, ha! Moon, that's enough.
How is the situation now?

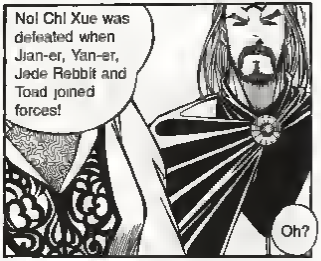
Let's act according to plan.
The latest report Mt Dream-Cloud is between 500- and 600- strong
Most of them are old people, women and children. There are only 200 or so fighters.
Among them, two are noteworthy.
One is their leader — Wang Chan!
He's resourceful and knowledgeable.
The other is his senior — Xue Wu! I hear he's the strongest in terms of spiritual strength.
He had a clash with Jian-er, and they're on a par.

Among their friends, two are not to be overlooked
One, the only disciple of Boundless Old Man — Wei Qi!

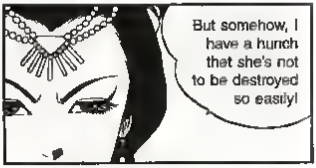

According to Jade Rabbit, he's surpassed his teacher
Second e young girl from nowhere!

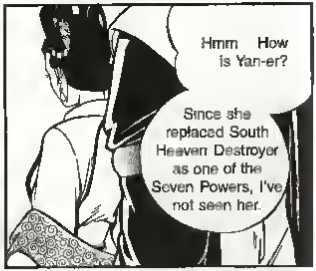
She hurt Jade Rabbit, Toad and Jian-er! This girl is someone to be reckoned with!


Could she be the one who killed South Heaven Destroyer two years ago?
The one known as Chi Xue, the Destroyer of Evil?


No! Chi Xue was defeated when Jian-er, Yan-er, Jade Rabbit and Toad joined forces!
Oh?

Rabbit and the others saw her collapse. She was even poisoned by two of Toad's venoms...
She should be dead by now...


But somehow, I have a hunch that she's not to be destroyed so easily!


Hmm... How is Yan-er?
Since she replaced South Heaven Destroyer as one of the Seven Powers, I've not seen her.

Ho! Yan-er has grown so pretty and voluptuous. Even I can't resist her charm...
I mean her strength...

Ho, ho, ho! Don't worry! Though she's less powerful than Green Dragon and Red Phoenix, "
...her wits more than make up for it!

That's good
Senior, 10 more days and you'll be meeting Xuan Hua the old man.
I've just mastered the ninth level of the Solar Shock, suffice to handle his eighth level of Xuan Hua Powers!
You're the only one capable of handling him.
Moon, must we really work with him?
Yes, neither he nor we have a choice
Why?

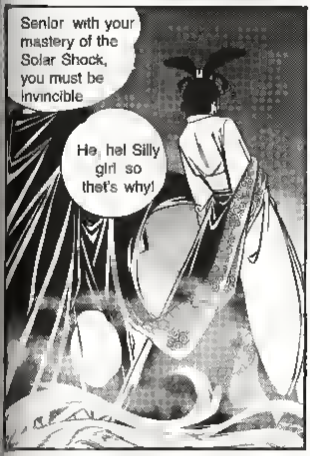
Senior, if Xuan Hua refuses to cooperate and we wipe out Mt Dream-Cloud ourselves ...
... we'll grow in strength and annihilate Xuan Hua as well
The second scenario is that we don't work with him and we also lose to Mt Dream-Cloud
Xuan Hua will seize the chance to attack us and we'll suffer heavy casualties
Thus, we have no choice but to combine forces to destroy Mt Dream-Cloud
It's not exactly cooperation, but looking for a chance...
... to destroy each other!

Xuan Hua sees you as his enemy
He makes little of me
Though he might get injured in the process, as I've said...
... since he makes little of me, he believes he can finish me off!
I'm sure he won't do his best when we attack Mt Dream-Cloud
He'll only bide his time and deal you a fatal blow when you make a mistake!
Do you mean I should also put on a false front just like he does in the operation?
No!
We have to conquer Mt Dream-Cloud so you must do your best!

Ha, ha! Senior, believe me. Victory this time does not hinge on strength.
The determining factor is wits!

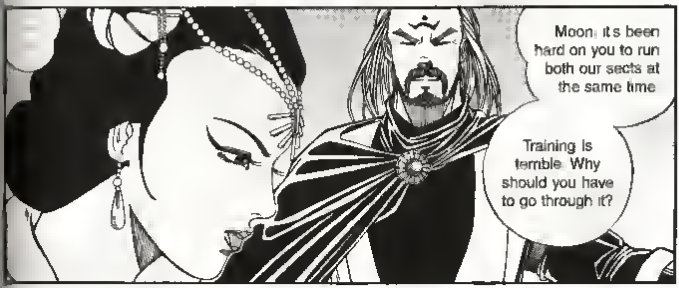
Moon, of course I believe you...

Sigh...
Well?


Senior, with your mastery of the Solar Shock, you must be invincible.
Ha, ha! Silly girl, so that's why!

Moon, have you forgotten the promise I made before my retreat?

After destroying Mt Dream-Cloud and Xuan Hua...
...I will impart half of my spiritual force to you!


Moon, it's been hard on you to run both our sects at the same time.
Training is terrible. Why should you have to go through it?

Senior, you're so kind to me!

Someone is here?
Yuenu, who is on duty today?
Chief, it's Jade Rabbit
Jade Rabbit — Hmm —

Hey, do you concede defeat?
I do... Moon Monarch... Your skills surpass mine
But I, Zi Yan, will never join the Moon Sect!
Ho ho! Such a proud little beauty! Lei Lie, the ex-White Tiger, made the right choice!
But, strong as he was, he was no outstanding teacher
Also, a pity his spirit left his body* too soon. Your Duel Extremes is far less powerful than his

** It is believed that when a practitioner of the Way dies, his spirit would leave his body*

I have my stupidity to blame! It has nothing to do with Teacher's guidance.
Really? It was not wrong of him to take a girl as his disciple.
His mistake lies in his ignorance of the biological differences between man and women.
Pant pant
Little beauty given your potential, you should be much stronger.
Do you want to improve?
How about making a pact with me?
What pact?

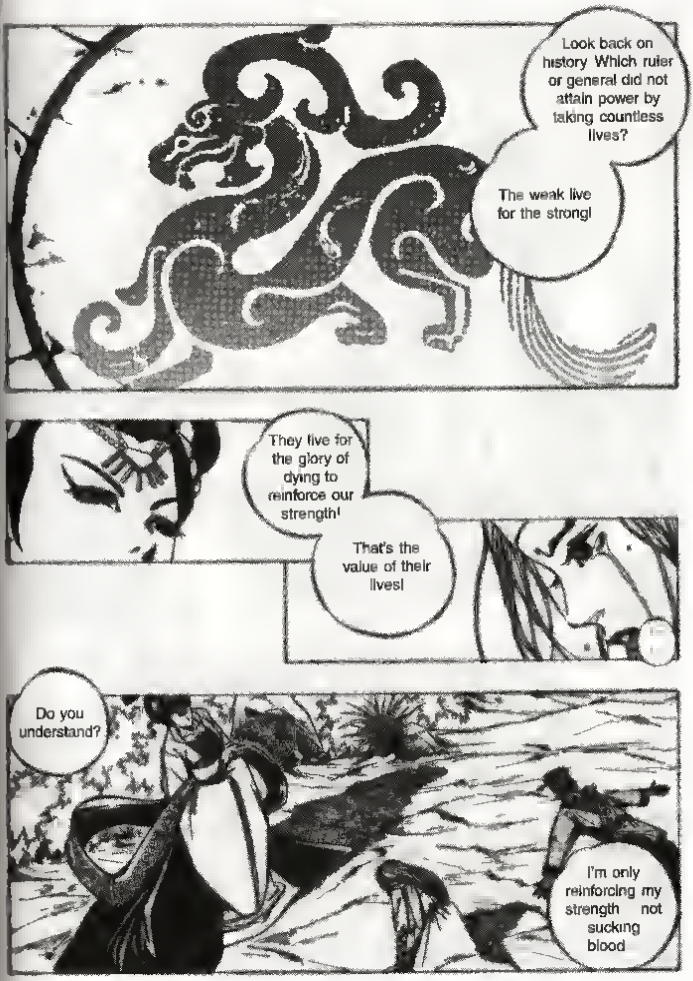
I'll teach you a method which you can apply to Dual Extremes
If there's no improvement within three months, I will stop pressing you
If there's an improvement, I believe you'll want to become my disciple
So, what's your decision? No harm trying.
Fine!
He, ha! A clever little beauty!

Ha, ha! The three months didn't go to waste, right?
What a big improvement!
Like I said, your teacher didn't bring out the best in you
Do you believe me now?

Listen. If you go on, within five years, you'll become a strong power in the Celestial Zone!
Ah!
Ah!
Ah!
Argh!

Retch!
Pant
What's happening?
Though what I taught you could reinforce your energy
...it brings about a biological change... You need fresh blood regularly!
No! I don't want human blood!

You win some, you lose some. If you quit now, you'll die from the eruption of blood vessels!
Why didn't you tell me?
You didn't ask!
No! No! I don't want to kill!
Silly girl. It's just taking a life. You'll get used to it
Zi Yan, only the strong can rule!
Look, if you kill one man, you're a murderer. If you kill 1,000 men, you're a hero!

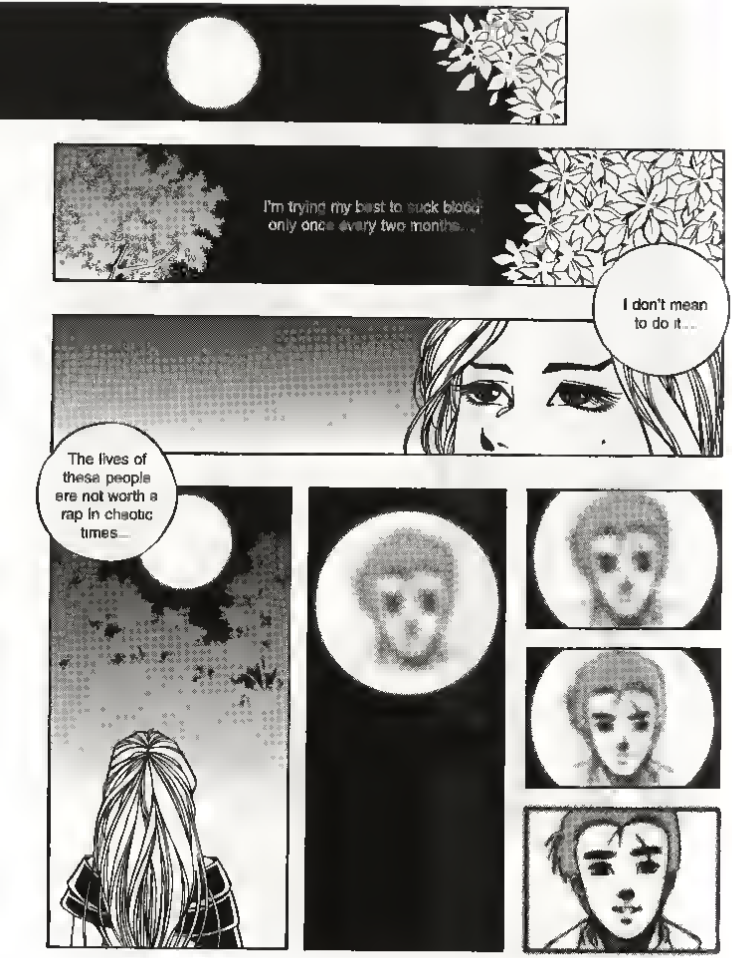

Look back on history Which ruler or general did not attain power by taking countless lives?
The weak live for the strong!
They live for the glory of dying to reinforce our strength!
That's the value of their lives!
Do you understand?
I'm only reinforcing my strength not sucking blood

Sigh... Blood sucking is only transitional
Now, you'll yearn for blood on every full-moon night
As your power grows, you'll need less blood
Pant— Really?
Moon Monarch... please do not tell anybody I'm feeding on blood...
I beg you— Sob...

Sigh... Yan-er, I understand how you feel
Rest assured I'll tell no one
A perfect beauty like you would want no one to see your ugliness.
Of course I understand your fear and anxiety...
That's your fatal weakness, my little beauty... Ha, ha, ha...

Quickening

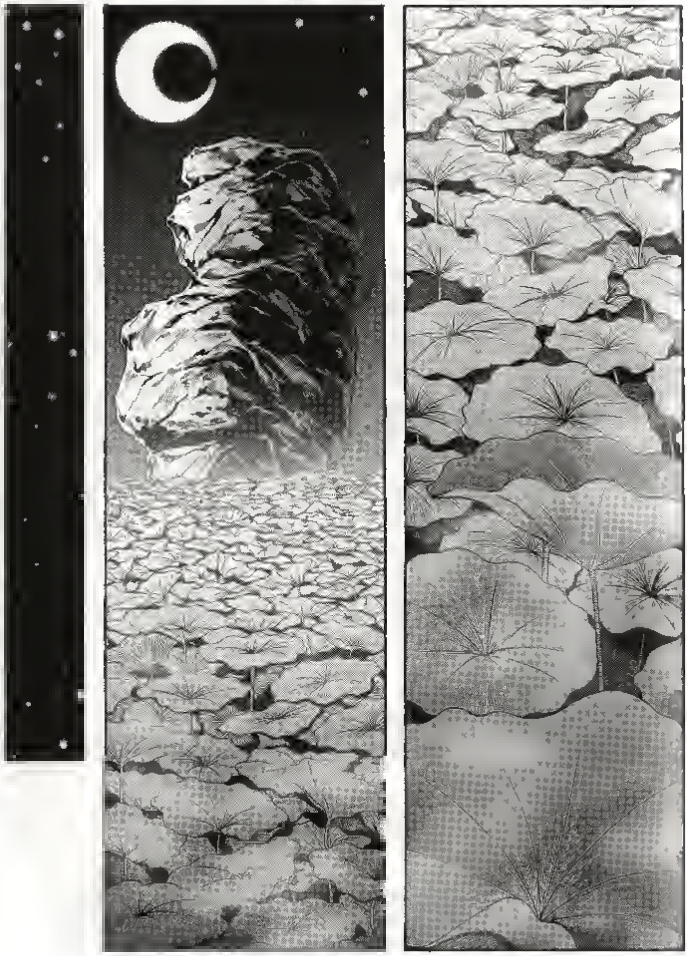
MOON
SHADOW
PEAK

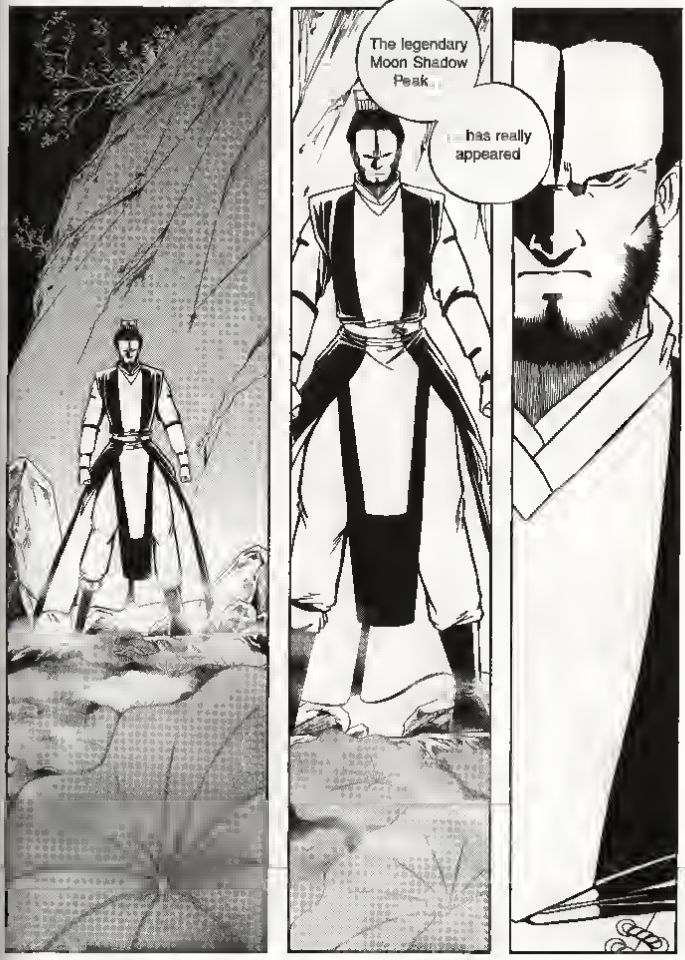

I'm trying my best to suck blood only once every two months...
I don't mean to do it...
The lives of these people are not worth a rap in chaotic times...

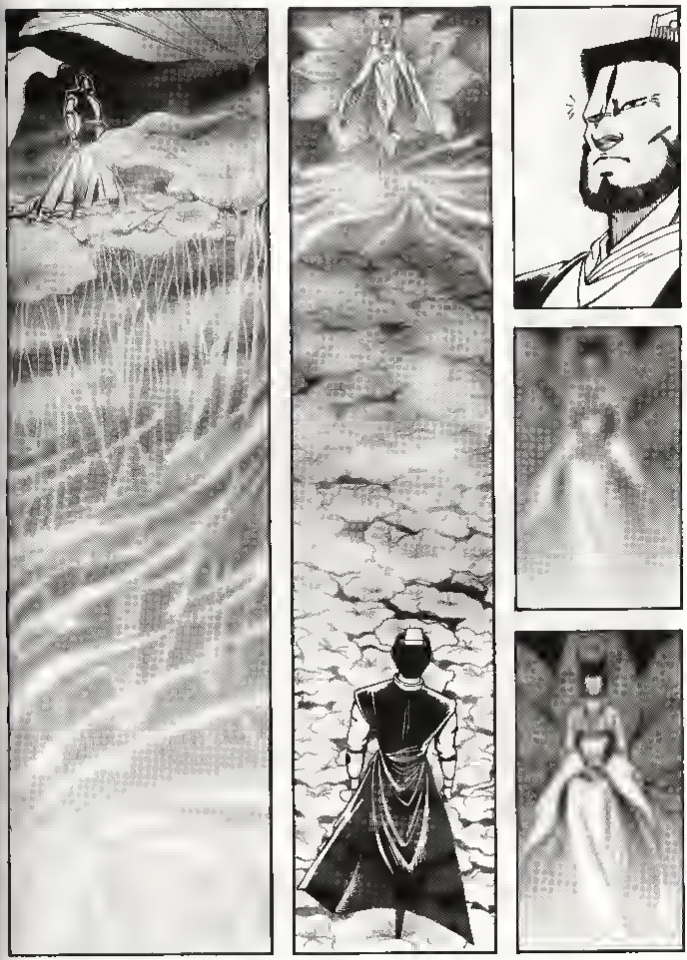
Hey... Good vs evil... It's hard to outfight each other.
Don't the good take lives too? We're all doing what we think is right.
What's the difference?
There's no clear line between good and evil.
Why are those people trying to stop me? Why can't they accept me?

Hey, so our Yan-er is upset at times too
You didn't even notice my presence!
Jian Ao, I'm in a bad mood. Don't provoke me!
I'm prepared to do anything to lift your spirits
He, he! We can't ignore Yan-er when she's feeling down. Can I do anything for you?

Very well, kill for me!
Kill all those I hate!
Oh, fine! Who are they? People from Bamboo Grove?
Yes. The formation might have changed, so gaining access will be impossible.
First, kill the girl with short hair!
That pretty girl?
Ha, ha! Does it pain you?

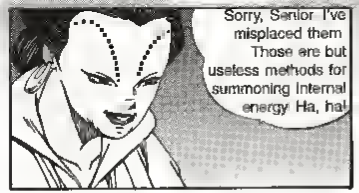



The legendary Moon Shadow Peak
has really appeared



It's really you...
Senior One Brow...
So you're still alive! What are you here for?
No Brow, don't worry. Since we're fellow disciples, I will not seek revenge!
But I want the handwritten copies which Teacher had left behind.

Ha! Ha! Ha!


Sorry, Senior I've misplaced them Those are but useless methods for summoning Internal energy Ha, ha!

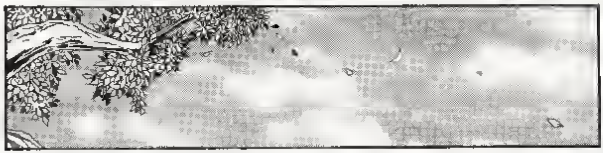
What?!

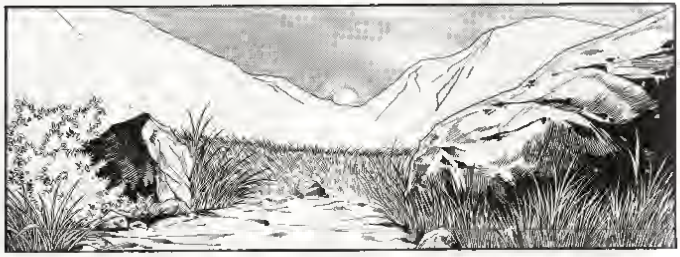
Ho, ho get e grip on yourself
By the way, who told you the route to this place?

Ha ha! Senior don't get it wrong Don't get it wrong

I wonder who your enemy is He hates you so much that he has sent you here to meet your doom!

Argh!
Congratulations! Senior, you've finally mastered the spirit sword!
Sigh! I wonder if you know that no one can leave Moon Shadow Peak alive!
A pity— my dear senior— Ha, ha





General Zuo... you dare stage a rebellion?
Hey Crown Prince, your second brother told me you have to die
– before he can ascend the throne I'm only doing his bidding Sorry!

Wait! Wait! I...
I'll give you 10,000 taels of gold... if you spare my life
I'll return to the capital to kill my brother... and then make you Commander-in-Chief!
Hey, Crown Prince! I know you only too well...
If I set you free, you will kill me one day!
Farewell, Crown Prince!
Argh!
Crown Prince, flee!
Chief Guard

Run! I can't hold out...
Crown Prince, run!

Ha ha... stupid pigs----
No escape for you! Ha, ha, ha!
BOOM

BOOM
Outrageous! Who had the temerity to kick me?
What? Blood!
Argh! You low-class cads! You made me, tha Crown Prince, lose my precious royal blood! You deserve death!
These two over here are dead Your side?
Sigh... All dead...

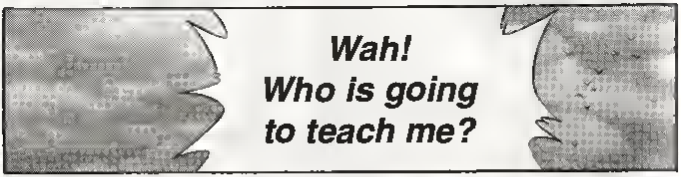
Hey! I'm giving you a lecture! Do you hear me?
Wow, a beauty! But she looks fierce!
Ho, ho, beauty! Ignore those lowly morons. My superior royal blood is oozing out. Save me first!
Hear ma? I am the Crown Prince!
In my eyes, all mortals are equal! There's no discrimination!
?
Xing Ling, let's bury them in the pit up front
Otherwise, wild dogs might devour them.
OK, we'll set off after burying them
Look here! How dare you not go down on your knees!

Have you finished? Aren't you ashamed of your doings?
You expect me to kneel to your title of "Crown Prince"?
How come they react so differently from others?
Xing Ling, let's go.
Wait! Wait!
Can't you see the Crown Prince is bleeding?!
Everybody is dead. I don't know my way home— Sob!

SHA
He, ha! Another huge one!
Ho, ho! It makes for a sumptuous dinner!
SH

Grr
I want six fish! Don't get them burnt!
I don't eat black and smelly fish!
Sorry, we did not include your share We didn't ask you to come along.
Right. You sit there without lifting a finger!
Can't you see we're all busy? There's no free food here!
But I am the Crown Prince of Wei! How can you expect me to do manual work?
Do you have seven heads with a mouth right on top? If you do, I'll give you free food.
Right, right!

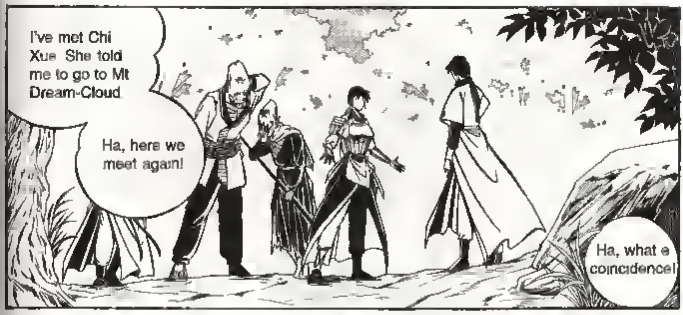
A crown prince who can t gather firewood!

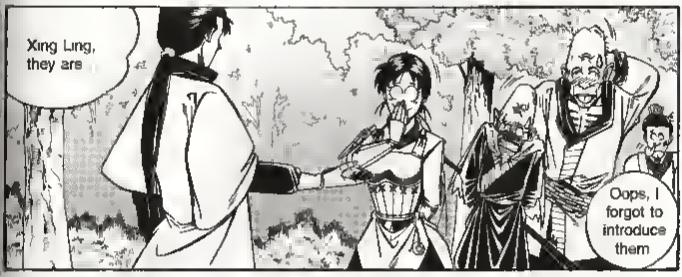


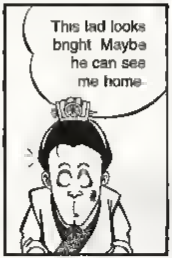
Xing Ling, we have to part here
Hope you'll find the herbs. We'll be waiting at Mt Dream-Cloud.
I'll return as soon as I can
Hey, guys, let's set off!
But it's safer here.

Yan-er, you said we are looking for the girl with short hair
But this way leads to Mt Dream-Cloud
Right, I have a hunch that she will go there to look for Wang Chan
We might run into her on the way
A woman's intuition?

Sigh... Hope you'll return to the path of righteousness
Wang Chan?
Xing Ling?
Weren't you looking for Chi Xue? How come you're here?
?
Huh! He's... Wang Chan of Mt Dream-Cloud?
Are you on the wrong track?
Hey, don't underrate me!

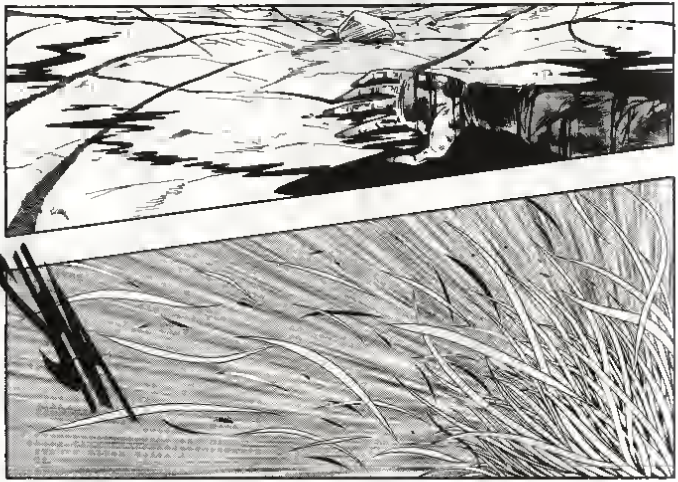

I've met Chi Xue. She told me to go to Mt Dream-Cloud.
Ha, here we meet again!
Ha, what a coincidence!


Xing Ling, they are...
Oops, I forgot to introduce them

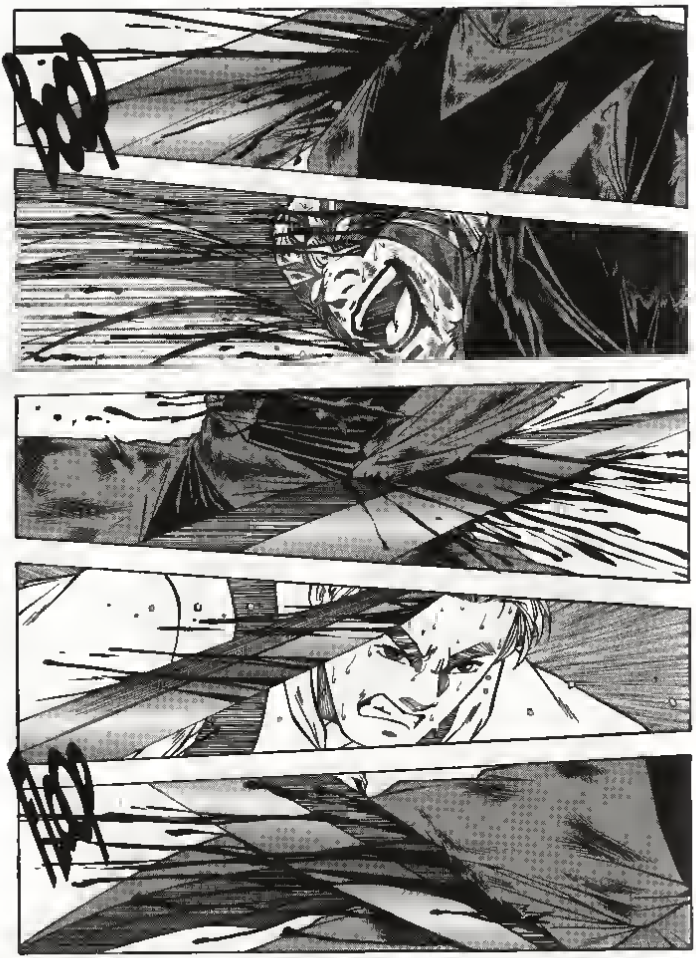

This lad looks bright. Maybe he can see me home.

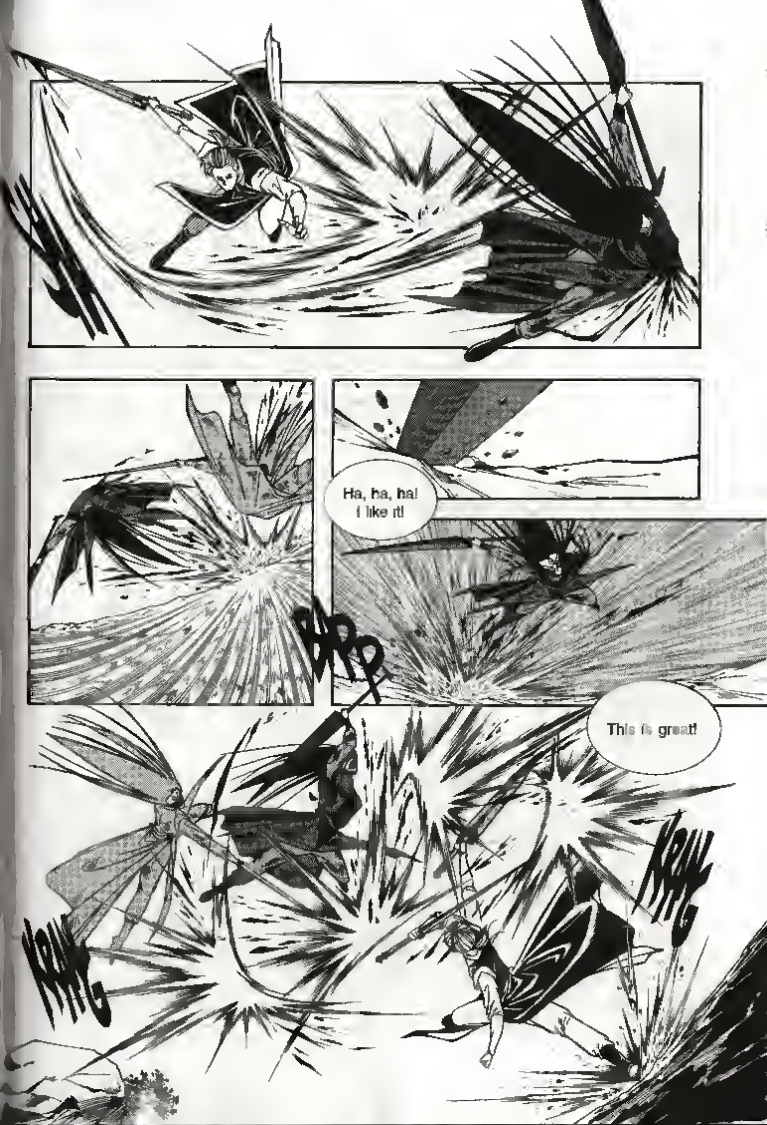
Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!

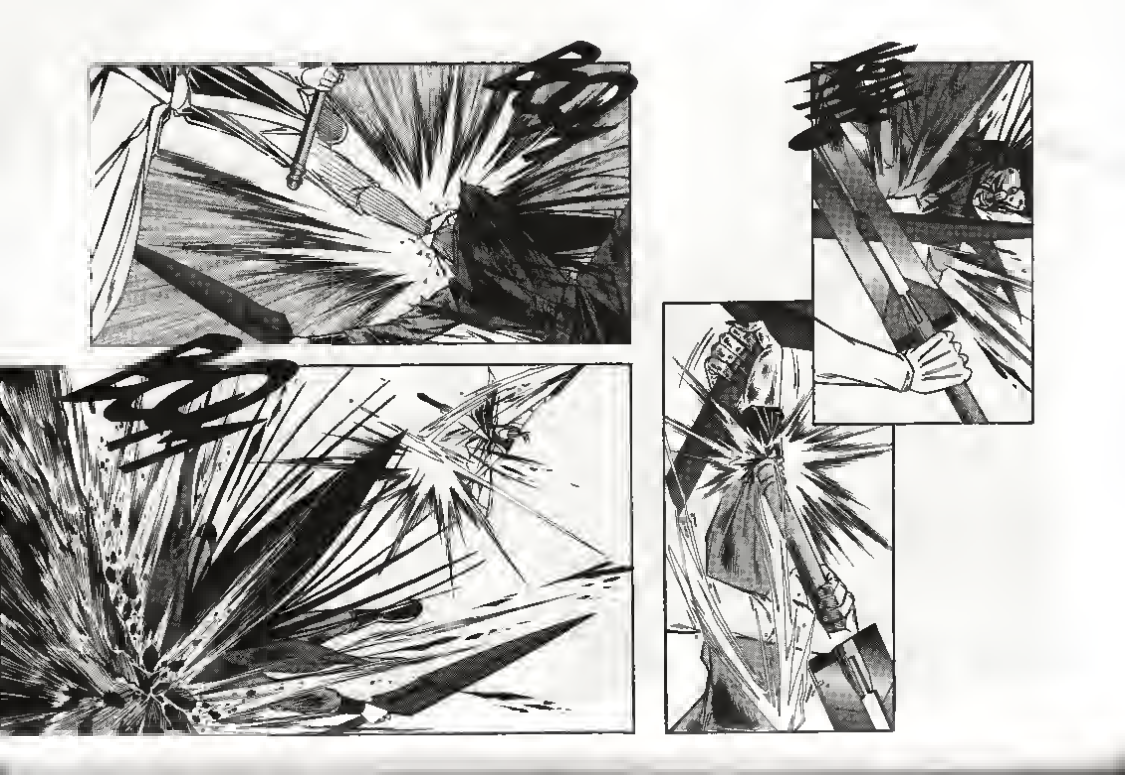
ONE AND
THE SAME
KIND



KRAK
KRAK
KRAK

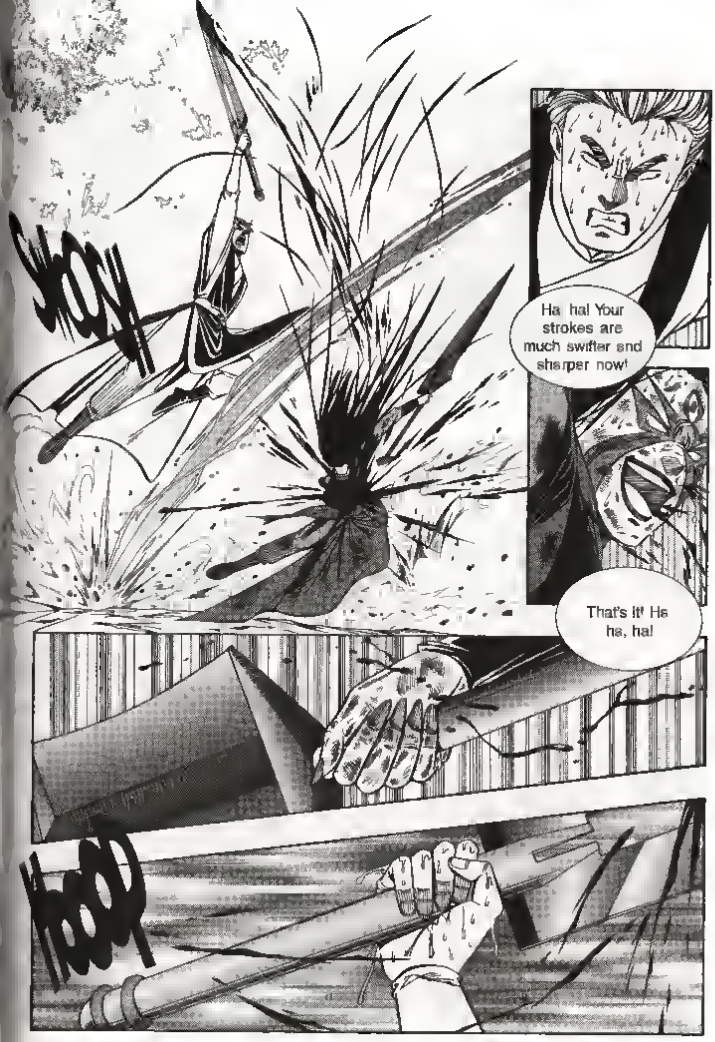

BOOM
BOOM

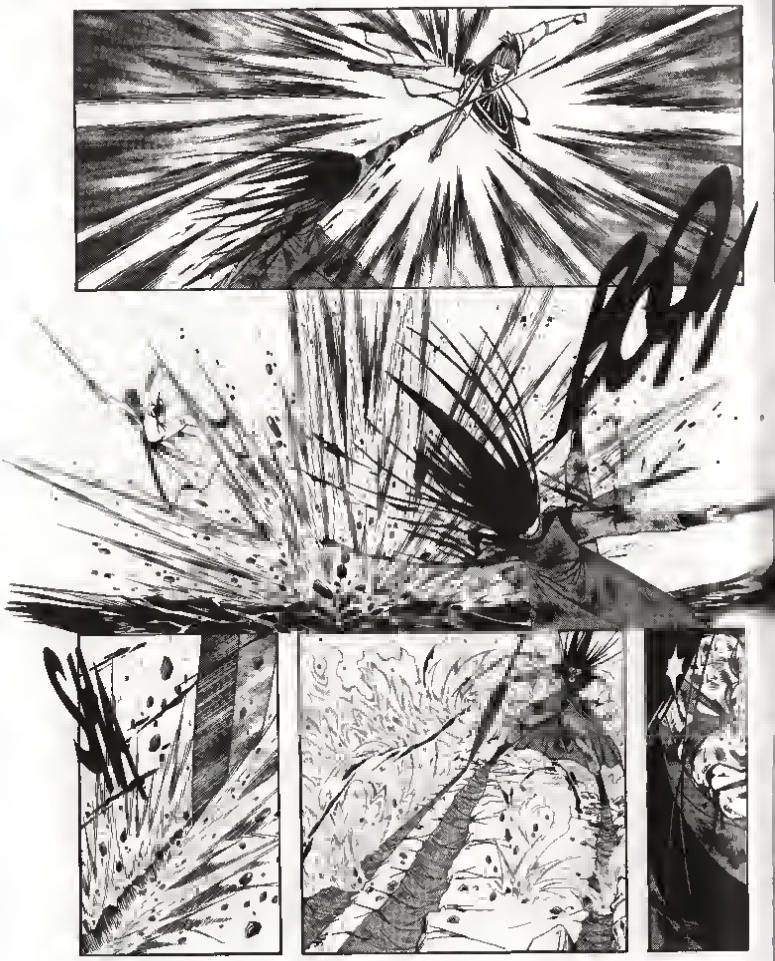

Ha, ha, ha!
I like it!
BRR
This is great!
KRAK
KRAK



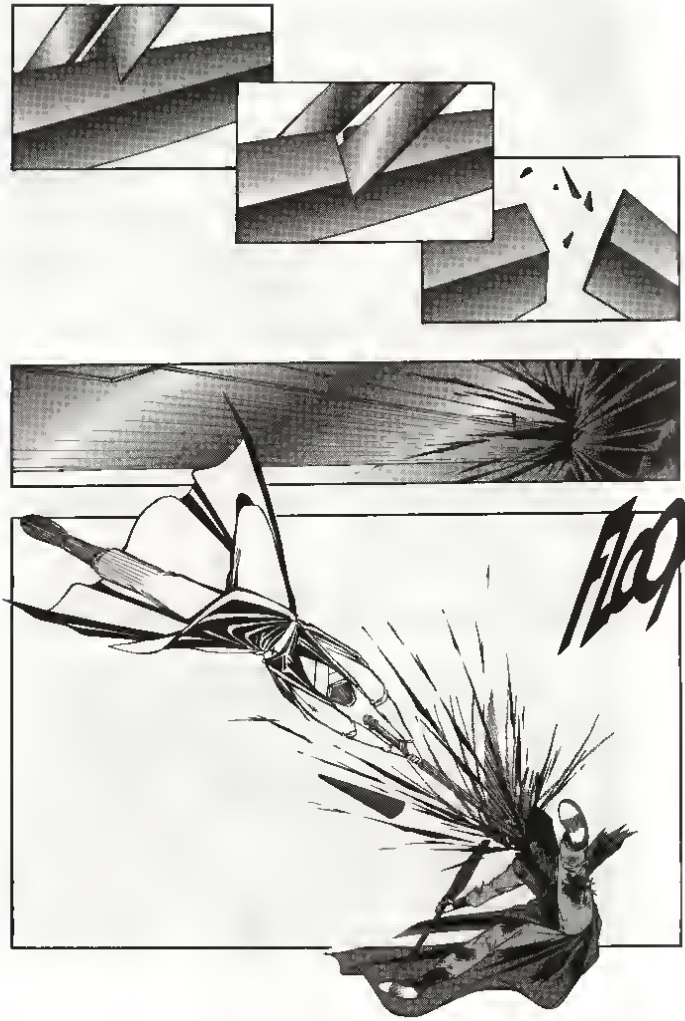
BAP
BOO
SH
Ha, ha! Try again! Try again!
SWOOSH

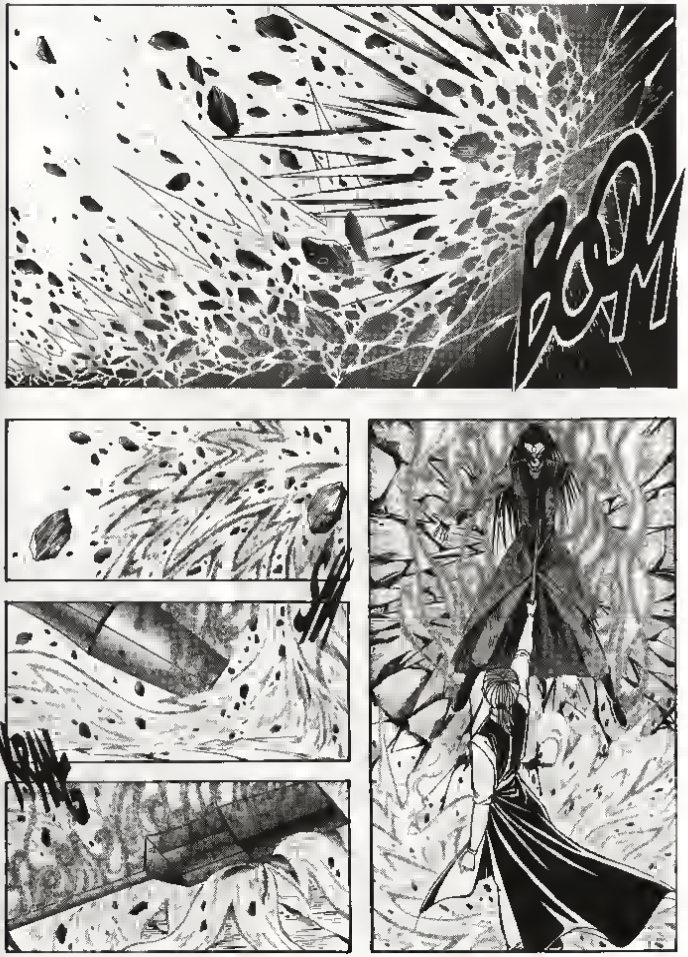
SWOOSH
BOOM
BOOM


Ha ha! Your strokes are much swifter and sharper now!
That's it! Ha ha, ha!


KOH

HEAVENLY THUNDER-
SLASH!

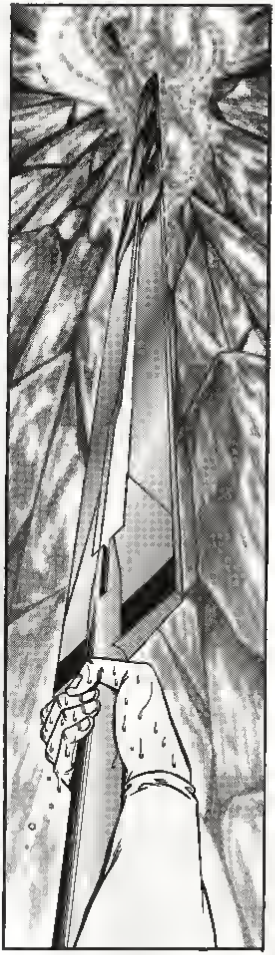

Flap

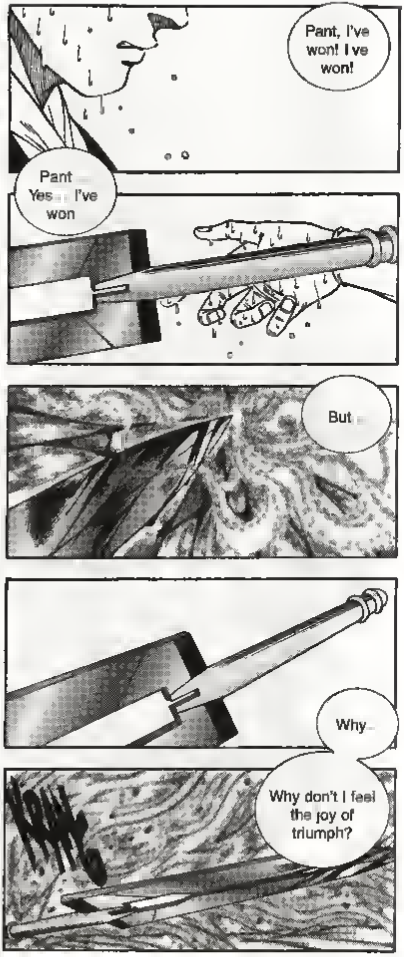

BOOM

Pant, ha
Ha, ha ha
Pant

Ha, ha... Well done! I like it! Ha, ha...
I like it! Look again. Is there a difference between us?
Hey... I'm not defeated...
You and I are one and the same!
Pant

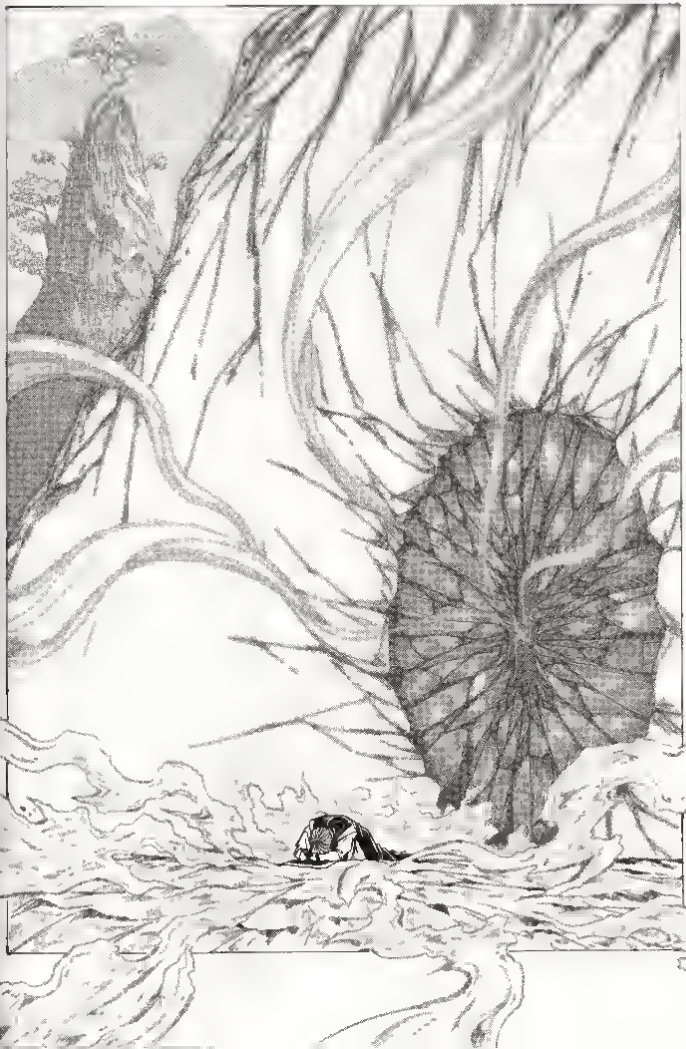
Ha, ha! We're birds of the same feather!
Ha, ha! One and the same! I love it!
Ha, ha... Good and evil... Ha, ha!
Ha!
Pant, pant...

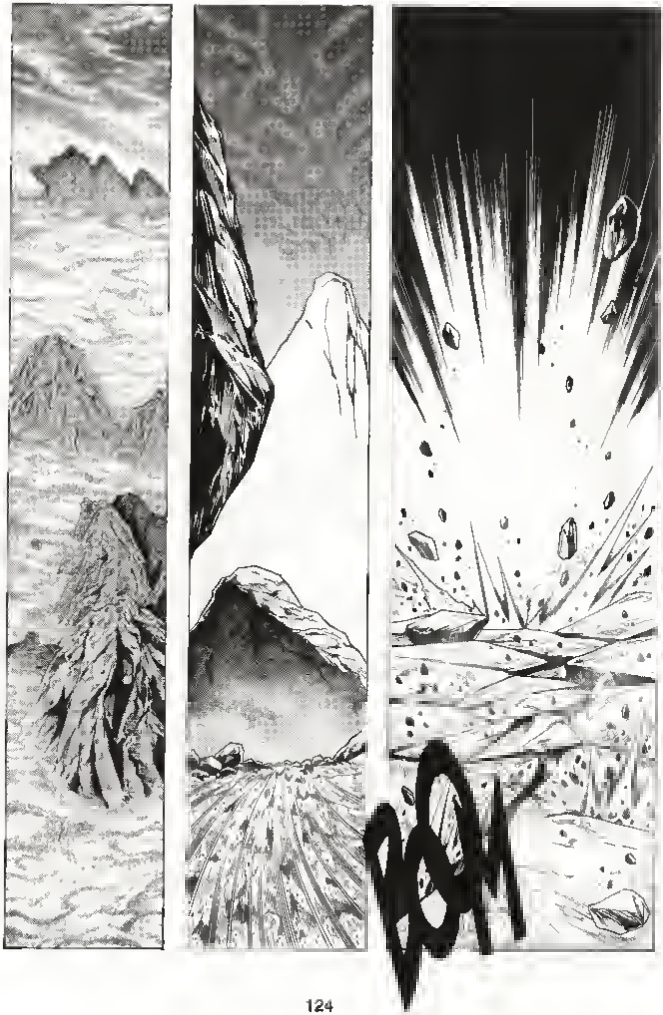


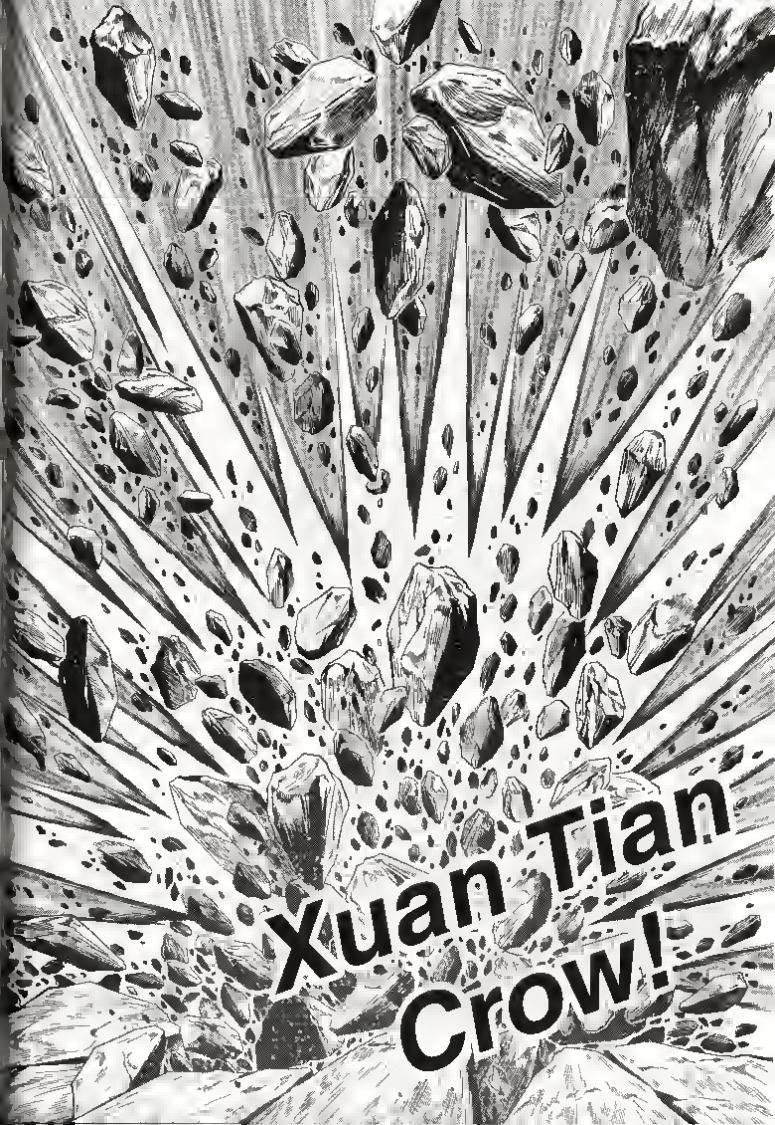

Pant, I've won! I've won!
Pant... Yes... I've won
But...
Why...
Why don't I feel the joy of triumph?

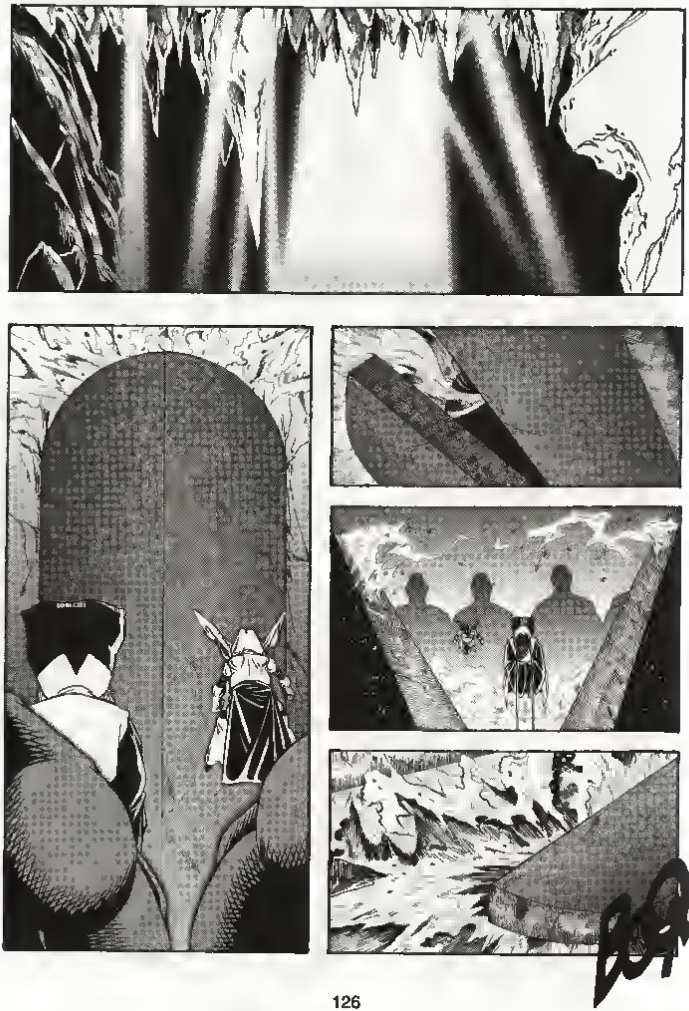
Pant...
Why... why?
No! I can't be inferior to them!
I do not fear them!! No!
Hey... I'm not defeated...
You and I are one and the same!
We're birds of the same feather!
Ha ha! One and the same!
He, ha, ha!
No! No, it can't be true!

No!!



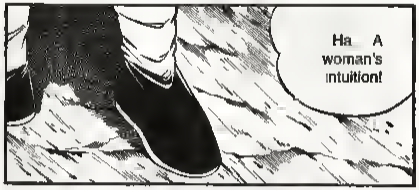

BOOM

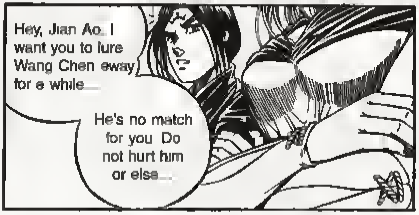

Xuan Tian
Crow!


BOOM

Congratulations on having mastered your skills, Xuan Hua Divine!
Xuan Tian Crow died in the fight!

Handsome guy, if you escort me home, I'll make you a high-ranking official,...
...give you 100 taels of gold and let you choose several women from my harem!
Cheep, cheep... Think it over.
Though none of them is a match for this lady...
Sorry! I've told you, I need to go urgently...
But I'll draw you a map. Find your own way home.
I can't read a map...
Hey! Stop whining or we'll ditch you!
Darn you...


Ha... A woman's intuition!


Hey, Jian Ao. I want you to lure Wang Chen eway for a while...
He's no match for you. Do not hurt him or else...

Sigh... Life is so tough. It's even worse when you try to please a pretty woman.

I know you can do it!

Ha, ha!

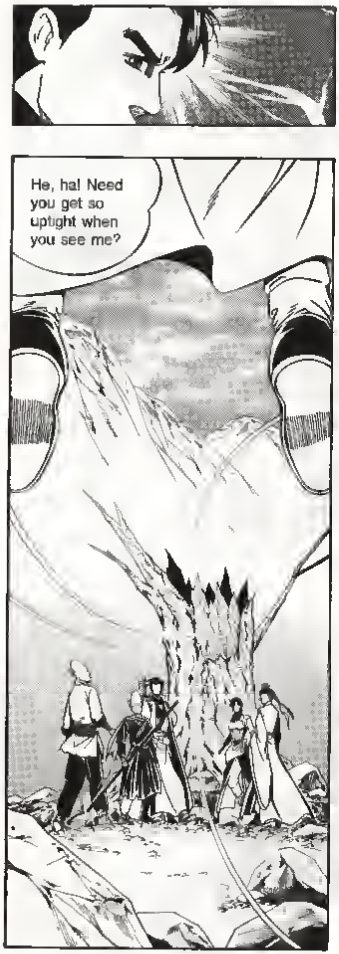
Chan, what place is this?
There's a strong evil aura here...
This is Maling Way
Maling Way?
Long ago, a tragic battle broke out here.
Ah! I remember! The famous Battle of Maling!
Huh?

I've heard the story before
Long ago, there lived an expert in the art of war — Sun Bin. He was buddies with his junior Pang Juan.
Later, Pang Juan became a Wei general. Not long after, Sun Bin also arrived at Wei.
Pang Juan knew Sun Bin was superior to him in talents and might find favour with the king in future.
Sun Bin...
Pang Juan...
The ruthless Pang Juan thus plotted against his trusting friend.
He tricked the king of Wei into meting out *binxing** to Sun Bin. The poor man was thus crippled.
Pang Juan even locked him up so as to force him to transcribe their mentor's teachings on *Sun Zi's Art of War*.

*Binxing is a punishment whereby a person's kneecaps were removed

Later, Sun Bin feigned madness and fled back to his homeland, the state of Qi
where he was made an advisor. He met Pang Juan once again at the Battle of Maling
In that famed battle, Sun Bin wrote "Pang Juan shall meet his death here" on a tree
There, by trickery, he killed Pang Juan and crushed the Wei enemy*!
Oh... What a massacre. No wonder this place has an evil air.
Chan, there's only a withered tree here!
Is it the tree where Pang Juan was shot to death?
Ha, I'm not very sure... but maybe...

*Please read the appendix for more details on the battle between Sun Bin and Pang Juan


He, ha! Need you get so uptight when you see me?

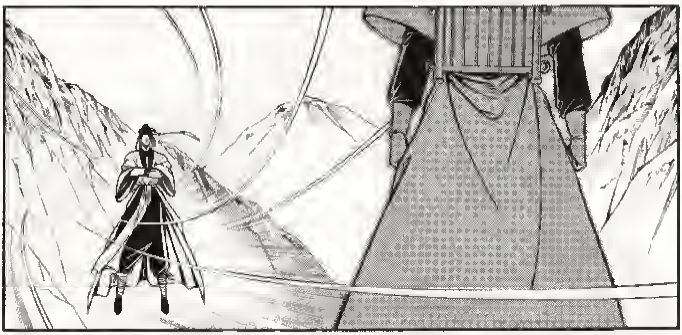
What?! This man can fly! How can that be?!
Green Dragon?

Wang Chan, I came because of you. I couldn't care less about the others.

Oh! So he's only after the handsome guy. Thank goodness!

Chan, let's join forces against him!
Xing Ling, you're not strong enough You and I are no match for him
Go back with the others and wait for me at Mt Dream-Cloud
What? No way!
With you gone, I'll have no worry Besides, I'm familiar with the surroundings
Heed my advice I will catch up
Hey well? Still discussing?

Xing Ling, believe me
All right.
Let's go, guys!
Right It's none of our business Let's go!



Good! A brave leader indeed!

Save your compliment You might be disappointed.

Oh?

Confronted by one of the Seven Powers, why won't I flee?
Ha, ha! Very practical!
But can you escape?

Xing Ling, are we leaving Wang Chan in the lurch?
We can't help it... Sigh...
Instead of helping him, we might become a burden... Dam! I'm so ashamed of myself!
But I believe that Wang Chan, with his wits, can escape danger
Why worry about him? You can hardly fend for yourself!
White Tiger Zi Yan?!

Sun Bin — Military Genius in a Wheelchair

Descendent of Sun Zi (380 - 320 BC)

Sun Bin was a famous military man during the Warring States Period. He was the descendant of Sun Wu (Sun Zi), whose *Sun Zi's Art of War* is an important classic that has enjoyed renown through the ages. Sun Bin was also blessed with his ancestor's military genius and wrote *Sun Bin's Art of War*. Framed by Pang Juan, Sun Bin was meted the punishment of *binxing*, where a person's kneecaps were removed. That was how Sun Bin's name came about.

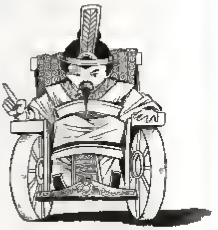


Illustration by See Heng

Disciple of Guigu Zi

Both Sun Bin and Pang Juan shared the same mentor — Guigu Zi. Seeing that Pang Juan was unscrupulous, Guigu Zi did not teach him the essence of the art of war. However, he admired the brilliant and diligent Sun Bin and taught him all 13 chapters of *Sun Zi's Art of War*. Studying this classic earnestly, Sun Bin became an expert in the art of war.

Sun Bin's Military Philosophy

Sun Bin lived during the chaotic Warring States Period. He believed that war was inevitable and necessary. However, he was against exploiting war, and was even more strongly opposed to fighting unprepared battles. He also stressed the importance of public sentiments and was convinced that an army that brought suffering to its people would be defeated. An army's strength was not the deciding factor in war. What was more critical was adaptability: one should consider the enemy's strength and other objective factors. Doing so would enable "the small to overcome the big" and "the weak to defeat the strong".

Surrounding Wei to Save Zhao

Soon after Sun Bin moved to the state of Qi, Pang Juan led Wei troops into Zhao, which asked Qi for help. Qi general Tian Ji wanted to send his troops to Zhao's aid but was stopped by Sun Bin, who said to him, "Wei is busy attacking Zhao now. Only the elderly soldiers and injured troops are left in their country. We can surround the Wei capital. Pang Juan will then be forced to rush back to defend his homeland and Zhao will be saved."

Tian Ji followed Sun Bin's advice and true enough, Pang Juan had to withdraw his troops from Zhao. This famous tactic is known as "surrounding Wei to save Zhao".

Tian Ji and Horse-racing

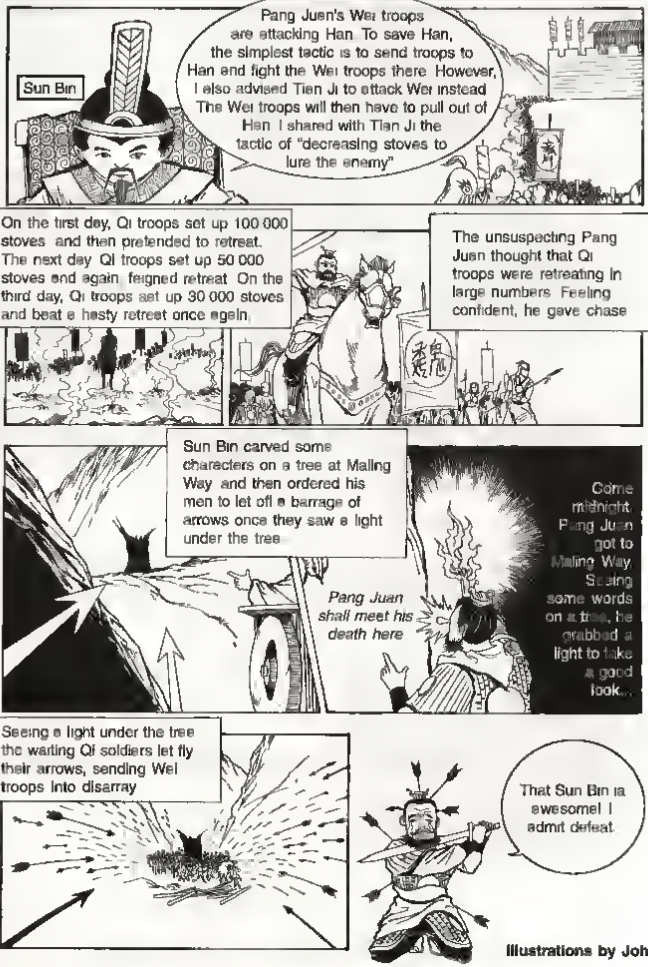
Tian Ji loved horse-racing, where three rounds were held to determine the outcome. Sun Bin imparted the following game plan to him:

- Round 1: Pit your worst horse against the opponent's best horse
- Round 2: Pit your best horse against the opponent's mediocre horse
- Round 3: Pit your mediocre horse against the opponent's worst horse

In the end, Tian Ji lost one round but won two and was declared the winner!

Battle of Meiling

Though the Wei troops were valiant and well-versed in warfare, Pang Juan was dealt a bitter defeat by Sun Bin in the Battle of Meiling. Where two strong powers were well-matched, the deciding factor of victory lay in military tactics.


Sun Bin
Pang Juan's Wei troops are attacking Han. To save Han, the simplest tactic is to send troops to Han and fight the Wei troops there. However, I also advised Tian Ji to attack Wei instead. The Wei troops will then have to pull out of Han. I shared with Tian Ji the tactic of "decreasing stoves to lure the enemy"
On the first day, Qi troops set up 100 000 stoves and then pretended to retreat. The next day, Qi troops set up 50 000 stoves and again, feigned retreat. On the third day, Qi troops set up 30 000 stoves and beat a hasty retreat once again.
The unsuspecting Pang Juan thought that Qi troops were retreating in large numbers. Feeling confident, he gave chase.
Sun Bin carved some characters on a tree at Maling Way, and then ordered his men to let off a barrage of arrows once they saw a light under the tree.
Pang Juan shall meet his death here
Come midnight, Pang Juan got to Maling Way. Seeing some words on a tree, he grabbed a light to take a good look...
Seeing a light under the tree, the waiting Qi soldiers let fly their arrows, sending Wei troops into disarray.
That Sun Bin is awesome! I admit defeat.

Illustrations by John

TCZ Coupon

Coming Up Next...

Xuan Tian Crow was killed and Xuan Hua Divine emerged from his retreat
What plot would the three evil honchos hatch against Mt Dream-Cloud?

Wang Chan and Xing Ling were no match for Jian Ao and Zi Yan.
What would they do?

Would the Battle of Maling repeat itself? Could wits triumph over strength?

Look out for Volume 12:
The Battle of Maling

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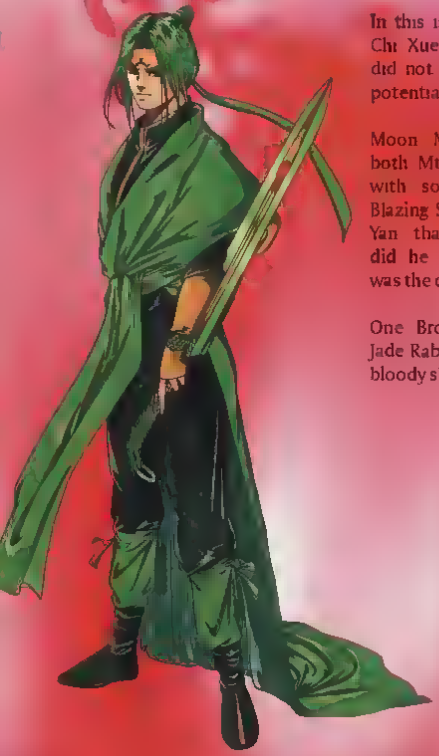

In this issue, Xing Ling's request to learn fro Chi Xue was turned down by the latter, wh did not want her influence to limit Xing Ling' potential to surpass her one day.

Moon Monarch hatched a ploy to d both Mt Dream-Cloud and Xuan Hua D with some help from h powerful s Blazing Sun Wang Chan told he heartbroken Yan that they should p meeting Litt did he know that Zi Yan's descent into was the doing of Moon M ach.

One Brow finally found his wayward junio Jade Rabbit. Meanwhile, Xue Wu was caught in bloody showdown with Xuan Tian Crow.

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